

THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Est 1923 · JULY 2017

GRAMOPHONE

gramophone.co.uk

KARAJAN'S RING CYCLE

50 YEARS ON

*The conductor's
powerful personal
statement on
Wagner's epic*



PLUS

Herbert Blomstedt at 90:
an extraordinary career

**Véronique Gens: the
high drama of song**



UNITED KINGDOM £5.75



Music... but not as you know it

- Professional recordings aligned with notation
- Adjust the tempo and jump to anywhere in the score

Try it now for free



Tido Music for iPad
tidomusicapp.com



Download on the
App Store



Watch and learn from the pros

- Exclusive performances and masterclasses
- Insight from leading pianists including Joanna MacGregor and Roy Howat

Try it now for free



Tido Music for iPad
tidomusicapp.com



Download on the
App Store



WIGMORE HALL

Experience the Exceptional

Intimate concerts featuring
internationally acclaimed
classical musicians in
central London

Tickets from £15

£5 for Under 35s at selected concerts

www.wigmore-hall.org.uk

Box Office: 020 7935 2141

The Wigmore Hall Trust
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP
Director: John Gilhooly OBE
Registered Charity Number 1024838

 Department
for Culture
Media & Sport

 
LOTTERY FUNDED

Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

GRAMOPHONE

SOUNDS OF AMERICA

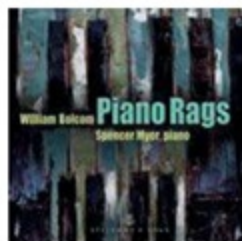
A special eight-page section focusing on recent recordings from the US and Canada

Bolcom

Piano Rags

Spencer Myer *pf*

Steinway & Sons © STNS30041 (72' • DDD)



William Bolcom has proved his compositional versatility in virtually

every genre you can name. As a masterly pianist, he has used keyboard techniques to serve whatever musical mission he's set out to accomplish. Over several decades, Bolcom combined his gifts to forge a collection of piano rags that have kept performers and listeners mesmerised.

Pianist Spencer Myer certainly sounds smitten with these disarming pieces. He plays Bolcom's miniature brainstorms with equal doses of sass and sweetness, giving full voice to the drama, poetry and humour that overflow from the page. In Myer's nimble hands, the music reveals the affectionate originality the composer lavished on a popular American art form that had languished for almost half a century until performers and scholars began championing it again in the late 1960s.

Bolcom can be heard paying tribute to ragtime greats, including Scott Joplin, while mixing in his own delicious harmonic and rhythmic flavours. Syncopated figures rub shoulders with haunting melodies as the 16 selections unfold on this disc, which contains three suites whose movements are interspersed with other rags.

The music evokes everything from ghostly apparitions and scenes in the Garden of Eden – including a naughty serpent whose kiss requires the pianist to literally knock on wood – to sundry manifestations of ragtime exuberance and lyricism. Bolcom infuses every piece with vivid character and Myers seizes the opportunity to illuminate these concise treasures, which deserve a place within recital programmes, and not merely as encore afterthoughts.

Donald Rosenberg

GRAMOPHONE *talks to...*

Susan Narucki

The adventurous soprano talks about the collaborative chamber opera *Cuatro Corridos*

What inspired you to commission this opera?

It started with a simple impulse: to tell a story about the place where I live and to create collaboration among friends. I didn't set out to commission an opera about human trafficking, but when the librettist Jorge Volpi brought up the subject and this particular story, I couldn't look away.

Why did you commission four composers rather than just one?

Jorge's libretto has a unique structure: it tells one story through the eyes of four different women. I wanted to mirror that structure by commissioning four composers, each with a distinctive point of view. I thought that by placing them side-by-side, unexpected tensions and layers of meaning could be created in the work as a whole. And it was essential to include perspectives from both sides of the US-Mexican border.



Why this specific ensemble – soprano, piano, percussion and guitar?

I thought that this instrumental combination would have remarkable possibilities for timbre, colour and texture. Also, we perform the work without conductor, so my colleagues are a visual – and visceral – part of the drama. But the primary reason is that I wanted to work with these virtuoso musicians, who are also dear friends.

With so much talk of border walls, do you see a collaborative work such as this as part of a process of building bridges?

Yes, absolutely – and artists are an essential part of that process. *Cuatro Corridos* is a work in which many lives have intersected; it poses more questions than answers, just like the border that defines its story.

Boykan

Impromptu^a. Violin Sonata No 2^b. Piano Trio No 3. 'Rites of Passage'. Viola Sonata^d. Psalm 121^e

^aPamela Dellal *mez* ^eEmil Altshuler,

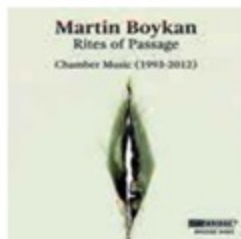
^{ac}Yohanan Chendler, ^bCurtis Macomber *vns*

^dMark Berger, ^eMary Ruth Ray *vas*

^{ce}Joshua Gordon *vc* ^bStephen Gosling,

^cSteven Weigt, ^dYoko Hagino *pfs*

Bridge © BRIDGE9483 (56' • DDD • T)



Martin Boykan (b1931), a native of New York City, is one of the US's most

distinguished composers. A pupil of Piston (at Harvard), Hindemith (Zurich and Yale) and Copland (Tanglewood), he also studied piano with Steuermann, helped found the Brandeis Ensemble, was the pianist with the Boston Symphony under Leinsdorf (1964-65) and is a distinguished figure in academia.

Previously, his music has appeared on New World (still available as download only), Albany and CRI; Bridge issued a disc of piano pieces in 2014 and this chamber disc makes a fine follow-up. All five works are from his main period of maturity so there is no pronounced stylistic progression between them. The single-minded purposefulness of the



Press play and pause

**Now streaming
in high definition**

primephonic.com
for life on an epic scale

classical downloads & streaming



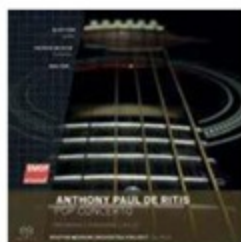
'Equal doses of sass and sweetness': Spencer Myer plays William Bolcom, who pays tribute to ragtime greats including Scott Joplin

unaccompanied violin Impromptu (1993) is present in the Viola Sonata (2012) – compellingly played by its dedicatee, Mark Berger, partnered by Yoko Hagino – a concentrated three-movement work of greater weight than its 12-minute span might suggest.

Another dedicatee is on hand to render the work composed for him with equal aplomb, Curtis Macomber and the Second Violin Sonata (2009). This takes the form of a fast-slow diptych though there is more going on beneath its surface than that simple divide suggests. The Third Piano Trio, *Rites of Passage* (2006), is the longest work, has the most movements (five) and is the only work to receive more than a cursory description in the composer's booklet note. Based on a set of silverpoint panels by his wife (Susan Schwalb), I found it the least involving piece here, lacking the impulse of the sonatas or *Psalm 121* (1997), nicely sung by Pamela Dellal. Top-notch sound from Bridge. **Guy Rickards**

De Ritis

Amsterdam. Ballet^a. Pop Concerto^b. *Riflessioni*^c
^aPatrick de Ritis ^{bn}Eliot Fisk ^{gtr}Duo X88 ^{pfs}
 Boston Modern Orchestra Project / Gil Rose
 BMOP/sound © 1051 (73' • DDD/DSD)



Boston Modern Orchestra Project's first CD devoted to Anthony Paul

De Ritis (b1968) was warmly received in these pages (10/12). This follow-up concentrates on works dating from 2013-14, though the most immediately appealing and effective is *Amsterdam*, a vibrant overture-cum-toccata originally commissioned in 2004 to include electronics (which malfunctioned at the premiere) but given here 'straight'. *Riflessioni*, a dark and minatory concerto for bassoon, electronics and orchestra, provides stark contrast. Written for bassoonist Patrick De Ritis (who may or may not be – some generations back – a relative of the composer), *Riflessioni* compellingly 'reflects' the lyrical and the aggressive, the stable and the unstable, light and dark, and sustains its length throughout, something the overlong and Coplandesque *Ballet* (his dissertation piece in 1997, given here in its 2013 chamber orchestral version), for all the advocacy of the players, does not manage.

The *Pop Concerto* is light and inoffensive; reworkings of four key pop songs of the composer's youth. Fisk renders its challenging solo part superbly but much of the orchestral writing is bland. U2's 'Beautiful day' comes off best, its essential lyricism caught by the sensitive transcription, but Seal's 'Bring it on' and particularly Alanis Morissette's blisteringly angry 'You oughta know' misfire completely. I had not appreciated before how much the concluding 'The way you make me feel' (Michael Jackson) is a rip-off of 'On Broadway'. Pop songs do not usually transfer well to the orchestra: all too often they just sound lame, the aural equivalent of Dad Dancing at the local disco (and as the father of two girls now in their twenties, I know whereof I speak)! I have nothing but admiration for the performances throughout, and for the fine sound. **Guy Rickards**

S Kander

Hermestänze^a. Solo Sonata^b.
 A Garden's Time Piece^c

^aJessica Petrus ^{sop}Jacob Ashworth ^{vrn}^bva

^cLee Dionne ^{pf}

MSR Classics © MS1578 (62' • DDD • T)

LAITMAN

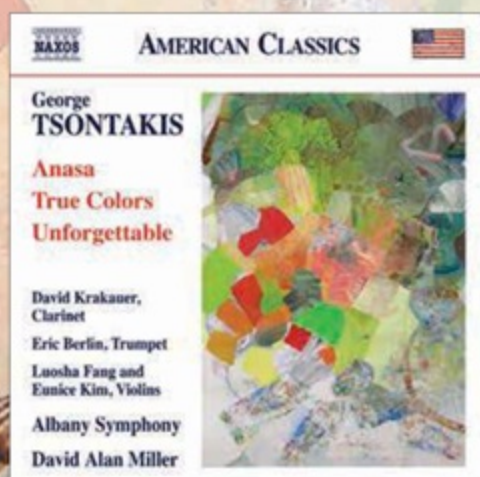
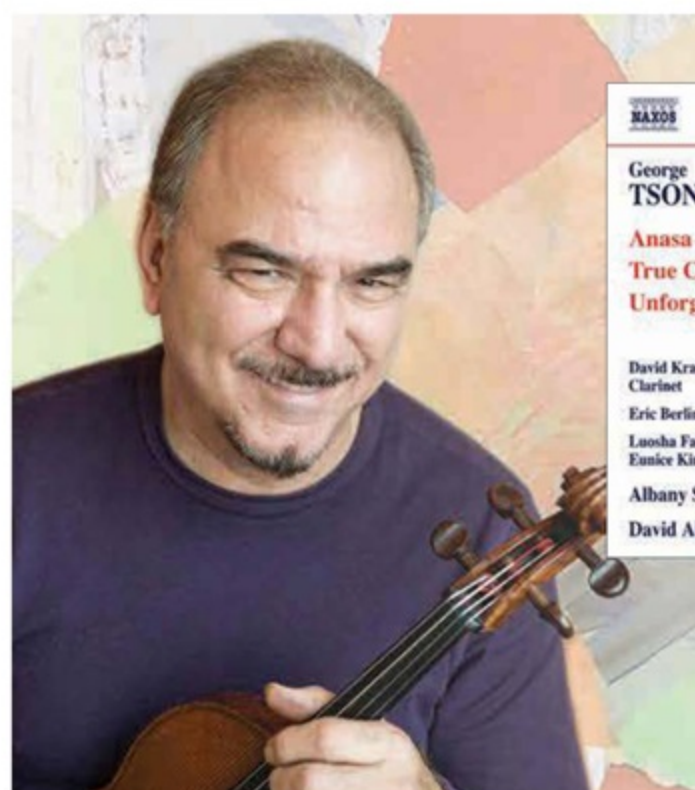
THE SCARLET LETTER

Laura Claycomb, Dominic Armstrong,
Malcolm MacKenzie, Daniel Belcher,
Kyle Erdos Knapp, Margaret Gawrysiak,
Opera Colorado Orchestra and Chorus,
Ari Peltó

**“...one of the most talented and
intriguing of living composers.”**

- FANFARE MAGAZINE

NAXOS · 8669034-35 · 730099903479 · AVAILABLE 08.17.17



TSONTAKIS

ANASA FOR CLARINET & ORCHESTRA
TRUE COLORS FOR TRUMPET & ORCHESTRA
UNFORGETTABLE

David Krakauer, Eric Berlin, Eunice Kim,
Luosha Fang, Albany Symphony,
David Alan Miller

**“...[an] enormously skillful, creatively communicative,
profoundly humane composer.” - GRAMOPHONE**

NAXOS · 8559826 · 636943982624 · AVAILABLE 08.17.17



ROSSINI

SIGISMONDO

Margarita Gritskova, Marcell Bakonyi,
Maria Aleida, Kenneth Tarver,
Paula Sánchez-Valverde, César Arrieta,
Camerata Bach Choir Poznań, Virtuosi
Brunensis, Antonino Fogliani

**“...the possessor of a deep,
flexible and technically
secure mezzo-soprano voice.”**

- OPERAPRONTI

NAXOS · 8660403-04 · 730099040372 · AVAILABLE 07.14.17





All three of Susan Kander's works on this new MSR Classics release have personal

ties, even beyond the fact that all three performances feature her son, the violinist Jacob Ashworth, who is also a producer at the innovative Heartbeat Opera company in NYC.

It was Ashworth who commissioned his mother to write 'a song-cycle for violin and piano', which she called *Hermestänze* in homage to the mercurial Greek god. The highlights of Kander's 14 short character studies may include 'The Lyre', which the violinist plucks out while simultaneously bowing a timeless lullaby against Lee Dionne's lovely piano surreally doubling the tune. By contrast, Kander's study of Apollo, another god of music, is raptly serene.

There's sterner stuff in Kander's Solo Sonata for the unusual configuration of violin-violoncello-violin. It was commissioned by Yuval Waldman in the wake of 9/11 and exists on a more remote plane, its emotions rooted in the different 'souls' of the two instruments themselves; the music is eloquent, impersonal and, in the central 'Lament' for viola, wrenchingly powerful.

A Garden's Time Piece was commissioned to celebrate the poet Leslie Laskey's 90th birthday, so Kander chose text from Laskey's 2010 collection *Bright Light and Dark Shadow* from which to assemble a dialogue in eight parts for soprano and violin. It is a lovely conceit, including mention of crocuses in the opening and closing stanzas, which Kander takes advantage of with devices such as the whirring trills accompanying 'There is a madness to the October winds'. Ashworth and Jessica Petrus play and sing expressively and knowingly throughout.

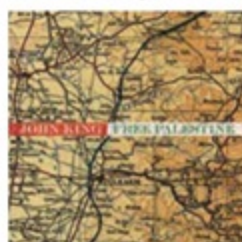
Laurence Vittes

J King

Free Palestine, Book 1

Secret Quartet with John King *oud*

New World © NW80786-2 (65' • DDD)



Like its title, John King's extended string quartet *Free Palestine* (2013-14; by my calculation the 22nd he has written) works on a number of different levels. Properly

Book 1, as a second volume is being composed, each of its 15 movements bears a double title juxtaposing the Arabic melodic mode used and a Palestinian village abandoned during the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. The music is, then, something of a fusion of Western and Middle Eastern, abstract and socio-political, through-composed and freely improvised. Influences from Terry Riley's *In C* and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony rub shoulders with the *maqam*'at and *iqat*'at, the melodic and rhythmic elements of traditional Arabic music.

A thought-provoking concept musically, then, superbly performed and recorded; provocative (as Steve Smith's booklet points out) from its title alone. King's immersion in Middle Eastern music pays undoubted dividends but ultimately I think his expressive purpose becomes submerged. Not even the elegant *coup de théâtre* of the composer leading the penultimate piece, *Huzam – Khan Yunis*, on the oud can redeem a work that seems to me by then fatally flawed. It is just too long, without the melodic or harmonic variety to sustain its hour-plus-long duration. (Curiously, the composer's website lists the duration as just 40', but considerable freedom is allowed.) Despite many striking passages, too much is, frankly, imaginatively threadbare; at times the music seems to reside almost inside the Arabic models, at others to evoke from afar a Hovhaness-type fusion. *Free Palestine* is avowedly experimental but needs editing: there is a striking 20-minute quartet here struggling to emerge from its longueurs.

Guy Rickards

Liang • Paredes • A Sierra • H Vásquez

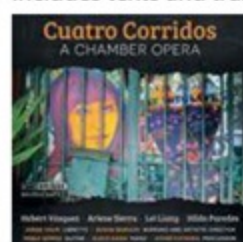
Cuatro Corridos – A Chamber Opera

Susan Narucki *sop* Aleck Karis *pf*

Pablo Gómez *gtr* Ayano Kataoka *perc*

Bridge © BRIDGE9473 (53' • DDD)

Includes texts and translations



The American soprano Susan Narucki was so horrified by the human trafficking rampant on the border between the United States and Mexico that she decided to address the subject head-on: she commissioned a chamber opera for soprano and three players, a collaborative work that tellingly crosses borders. The

result, *Cuatro Corridos*, comprises four scenes with libretto by novelist Jorge Volpi and music by two American-based composers (Lei Liang and Arlene Sierra) and two Mexican composers (Hilda Paredes and Herbert Vázquez).

Each corrido – based on the popular Mexican narrative song form – depicts trafficking from a different point of view. In Vázquez's 'Azucena', a young woman tells of her dreadful circumstances to music full of insinuating colours. The anti-heroine in Sierra's 'Dalia', with its relentless flow of anxious sonic ideas, is an old woman who knows she will be doomed for her trafficking activities. The irate female police officer who announces the arrest of traffickers in Liang's 'Rose' utters her spiky *Sprechstimme* lines in English to bursts of vibrant percussion figures.

Paredes's 'La tierra del miel' has an ironic title, telling of the 'land of milk and honey' to which Iris, the young friend of the narrator, Violetta, goes to seek a good life but winds up being raped and murdered. The music is brutal and prismatic, a powerful conclusion to an opera that doesn't flinch from its lurid topic.

Narucki is fearless and expressive as she inhabits each character. She shares the stage with equally intrepid colleagues: guitarist Pablo Gómez, pianist Aleck Karis and percussionist Ayano Kataoka.

Donald Rosenberg

Mozart

Trio, 'Kegelstatt', K498^a. Oboe Quartet, K370^b.

Piano Quartet No 2, K493^c

^bThomas Gallant *ob* ^cSally Pinkas *pf*

^bcAdaskin String Trio; ^aEnsemble Schumann

MSR Classics © MS1447 (62' • DDD)



Mozart made it possible for musicians of many instrumental stripes

to bask in his artistic genius. On this new CD, the members of the Adaskin String Trio and Ensemble Schumann share their delight in works requiring varied forces. There's even the premiere recording of the *Kegelstatt* Trio, K498, originally for clarinet, viola and piano, in a version featuring a different wind instrument, the oboe.

Clarinetists and others who hold the first incarnation sacred might object, but the rest of us can savour the *Kegelstatt* – German for bowling alley, where Mozart

GLORIAE DEI *cantores*

PRESENTS



“...tension, excitement,
forward momentum...
much to savour”

GRAMOPHONE

“The result is one of the finest
recordings this work has
ever received”

FANFARE

“A landmark recording...
destined to become
the new standard for this work”

MUSICA RUSSICA

To order, Call 1-800-451-5006

www.paracleterecordings.com

www.naxosdirect.com, www.amazon.com

DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP
INNOVATIVE | ECLECTIC | FASCINATING | INSPIRATIONAL

New Releases



SCHUBERT: THE COMPLETE ORIGINAL PIANO DUETS
GOLDSTONE & CLEMMOW
The series which launched Goldstone & Clemmow as internationally renowned pianists, with several rarities, and running from D.1 to D.968.
Divine Art dda 21701



THE PIANO AT THE BALLET, VOL 2 'THE FRENCH CONNECTION'
ANTHONY GOLDSTONE
Rare transcriptions of ballet music by Poulenc, Sauguet, Debussy, Françaix, Thiriet, and the Paris-connected Stravinsky and Asafiev.
Divine Art dda 25148

Both above in memory of Anthony Goldstone (1944-2017)



ENIGMAS
ELSPETH WYLLIE, et al.
A sumptuous collection of works for solo piano/chamber duos, from Elgar, Bowen, Leighton, Rubbra and Sackman.
Divine Art dda 25148



INTRICATE WEB
FITZWILLIAM STRING QUARTET, et al.
A delightful anthology of new music: quartets and chamber works by Liz Johnson – her debut album.
Métier msv 77206 (2CD)



JOHANN MATTHESON: HARPSICHORD SUITES
GILBERT ROWLAND
Following his successful 3-volume series of Handel's harpsichord suites, Rowland turns to the lesser known but very skilled German composer.
Athene ath 23301 (3CD)

Follow us on Facebook, SoundCloud, Twitter and YouTube
Available at all good dealers in both CD and download format
and direct from

www.divineartrecords.com

Distribution in the UK by



Worldwide distribution by





'Fearless and expressive': Susan Narucki commissioned and performs a new chamber opera, *Cuatro Corridos*, a collaborative work that deals with human trafficking

may have been playing while composing – without reserve. As played by Ensemble Schumann oboist Thomas Gallant, viola player Steve Larson and pianist Sally Pinkas, the work's charms receive articulate and expressive treatment. Balances between instruments are superbly gauged and the players shape the music's juxtaposition of tenderness and jubilation with unforced intensity.

Gallant's ripe timbre is particularly welcome in the glorious buoyancy and poetry of the Oboe Quartet in F, K370. Mozart sends the oboe in every direction, leaping merrily and soaring on high, while darkening the sky for the second movement's poignant, almost operatic lines. Whether singing like an early incarnation of the Countess or bouncing nimbly about, Gallant is a master of the work's inspired content in close alliance with Larson and cellist Mark Fraser.

Pinkas is the scintillating force in the Piano Quartet in E flat, K493, in which she draws a spectrum of nuances from the keyboard. Larson, Fraser and their Adaskin colleague, violinist Emlyn Ngai, team with the pianist in a performance that is by turns crisp, heartfelt and robust.

Donald Rosenberg

'The Lightning Fields'

Daugherty *The Lightning Fields*^a

McKee *The Adventures of...*^b. *Song for a Friend*^a

Peaslee *Catalonia*^c Plog *Trumpet Sonata*^d

Schnyder *Trumpet Sonata*^e

Jason Bergman *tpt/flg*

Steven Harlos *ac/pf/celesta*

MSR Classics © MS1630 (70' • DDD)



Jason Bergman's adventurous recital of trumpet music written or revised since 2003,

mostly premiere recordings, ranges from Richard Peaslee's sad, elegant homage to Catalonia to Kevin McKee's actual adventure, a manic romp he calls a 'mini super-hero soundtrack'.

In between, Daniel Schnyder's Sonata from 1994, revised in 2013, is very cool, angular, hip, somewhere beyond Euro-jazz, six non-stop minutes of cascading riffs, swaggering reflections, intriguing international dialogues and tours de force of virtuosity. No wonder it was the official piece for the 2003 Concours de Trompette Maurice André.

Michael Daugherty's *The Lightning Fields* is a set of four tone poems inspired by natural or artificial light phenomena in

North America; of those, his electric evocation of the phantasmagoric Marfa lights near the Rio Grande river and the Mexican border most successfully fire the inspiration.

In addition to his riotous *The Adventures of...*, McKee's heartfelt eulogy *Song for a Friend* pours out a lovely, open-hearted melody in tribute to a musician and educator who inspired his students and colleagues and illuminated lives. The second recording of Anthony Plog's Sonata from 2009 recalls its sterling qualities, including the insanity that is the *Molto vivace*.

When Bergman is playing trumpet he takes command; when he plays his flugelhorn – in the slow movement of *Catalonia* and in the Marfa section – he becomes a poet. At the piano, Steven Harlos sets landscapes with dynamic flash and colour, always pulling back to avoid being trampled by stampeding trumpet flourishes and runs. They make a nice combination. Laurence Vittes

primephonic

Amplify your life with the sounds from America and around the world at primephonic.com. For life on an epic scale.

GRAMOPHONE

Choose the right
subscription for you

- THE GRAMOPHONE CLUB
 - PRINT EDITION
 - DIGITAL CLUB
 - DIGITAL EDITION
 - REVIEWS DATABASE



THE WORLD'S LEADING CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS MAGAZINE

EXPAND YOUR COLLECTION

With the world's most authoritative classical music reviews section, written by our unrivalled, international and objective panel of expert reviewers

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

We are devoted to exploring the artists stamping their mark on recording today, with captivating features and exclusive interviews

COMPOSER PROFILES

We celebrate composers both past and present, providing you with a unique perspective on the lives and work of the giants of the classical music world

SOUNDS OF AMERICA

Every issue includes a special eight-page section focusing on exciting new releases from North American artists and labels

Visit www.magsubscriptions.com/gramophone
or call +44 (0)1722 716997

An ever-changing industry grows and blooms

Every year, around this time, I report back from the annual gathering of the classical industry at the Classical:NEXT conference. Bringing labels, distributors, innovators and artists together always breeds good ideas, goodwill and a better, shared understanding of where, as an industry, we are heading.

Year after year, the constant is the extraordinary commitment to brilliant music-making. But much else continues to change. Streaming continues to offer both opportunity and challenge. According to the latest figures from the UK record industry body the BPI, streaming is increasing massively, from 200 million weekly streams in early 2014 to 1 billion at the end of 2016 (that's just in the UK, though across all genres). People are paying for it too. There are now 100 million subscribers to streaming services globally; cheering news, as I believe it important that there should be a value relationship between people's ears and pockets: recordings are not, after all, made for free.

But the concern I still hear from many labels – particularly those operating on the more traditional model of paying to make, and then own, a recording – is that they are not receiving the return on investment they would once have expected, and unless this is addressed and resolved, life will not get any easier for them, and we, the listener, will be the poorer for it.

Meanwhile, streaming continues to evolve. We're familiar with the mega-companies in the online music world – Spotify, Apple – but we're also seeing a growth in smaller companies trying to target more focused streaming markets, whether around sound quality, or



repertoire and label, or the way information and music are presented. As to how many such services people will be prepared to pay for (as opposed to just opting for one that does everything), only time will tell. But to see so many organisations, new and old, recognising realities and yet seizing opportunities is heartening.

All this couldn't be further from the Chelsea Flower Show, which I visited straight after returning from Classical:NEXT to see the Morgan Stanley Garden, created in conjunction with the National Youth Orchestra. For its designer Chris Beardshaw, it was 'a vibrant celebration of the patterns found not only in nature, but also in music, art and communities'. For 17-year-old composer Lauren Marshall, who wrote a piece inspired by it, it was an opportunity to draw parallels between what she sees as the 'linear journey' of both a garden and a piece of music. Last month's cover story explored the notion of crossing borders between genres of music – but here was a fascinating example of finding meaningful bonds between wholly different creative endeavours. On the one hand this felt wonderfully contemporary – forging unexpected links, drawing together audiences. On the other hand, Marshall is perhaps walking in the tradition of Handel, William Boyce, Thomas Arne and others whose work, south of the river at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, exemplified those bonds between gardens and music. But perhaps most exciting of all was simply that here was a project celebrating and showcasing the extraordinary accomplishment of youth. For where seeds are sown, flowers will bloom.

martin.cullingford@markallengroup.com

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



'I've long been interested in Karajan's studio *Ring* recording, and particularly in how it's been overshadowed

by the more famous Solti recording,' says **HUGO SHIRLEY**, the author of our cover feature. 'It was fascinating to look into the story of how it came about, and being helped by some of those involved made it even more so.'



'The evening before our interview, I saw his performance of Beethoven's Ninth,' recalls **PHILIP CLARK** of

the conductor Herbert Blomstedt, whose 90th birthday is celebrated this issue. 'His interpretation was sensitive and wore its intellectual energy lightly, and in person he exemplifies those same qualities.'



'Reading through Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder* with Alice Coote offered a masterclass in unlocking the myriad subtleties

of these five wonderful songs,' says our Editor-in-Chief **JAMES JOLLY** who interviewed the mezzo for this month's Musician and the Score feature. 'She explained them as beguilingly as she sings them.'

Gramophone, which has been serving the classical music world since 1923, is first and foremost a monthly review magazine, delivered today in both print and digital formats. It boasts an eminent and knowledgeable panel of experts, which reviews the full range of classical music recordings. Its reviews are completely independent. In addition to reviews, its interviews and features help readers to explore in greater depth the recordings that the magazine covers, as well as offer insight into the work of composers and performers. It is the magazine for the classical record collector, as well as for the enthusiast starting a voyage of discovery.

THE REVIEWERS Andrew Achenbach • David Allen • Nalen Anthoni • Tim Ashley • Mike Ashman • Richard Bratby • Edward Breen • Liam Cagney • Philip Clark • Alexandra Coghlan • Rob Cowan (consultant reviewer) • Jeremy Dibble • Peter Dickinson • Jed Distler • Adrian Edwards • Richard Fairman • David Fallows • David Fanning • Andrew Farach-Colton • Iain Fenlon • Neil Fisher • Fabrice Fitch • Jonathan Freeman-Attwood • Charlotte Gardner • Caroline Gill • David Gutman • Christian Hoskins • Lindsay Kemp • Philip Kennicott • Richard Lawrence • Andrew Mellor • Kate Molleson • Ivan Moody • Bryce Morrison • Hannah Nepil • Jeremy Nicholas • Christopher Nickol • Geoffrey Norris • Richard Osborne • Stephen Plaistow • Mark Pullinger • Peter Quantrill • Guy Rickards • Malcolm Riley • Marc Rochester • Patrick Rucker • Julie Anne Sadie • Edward Seckerson • Hugo Shirley • Pwyll ap Siôn • Harriet Smith • David Patrick Stearns • David Threasher • David Vickers • John Warrack • Richard Whitehouse • Arnold Whittall • Richard Wigmore • William Yeoman

CONTENTS

Volume 95 Number 1150

EDITORIAL

Phone 020 7738 5454 Fax 020 7733 2325
email gramophone@markallengroup.com
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER Martin Cullingford
DEPUTY EDITOR Sarah Kirkup / 020 7501 6365
REVIEWS EDITOR Tim Parry / 020 7501 6367
ONLINE CONTENT EDITOR James McCarthy / 020 7501 6366
SUB-EDITOR David Threasher / 020 7501 6370
SUB-EDITOR Marija Đurić Speare
ART DIRECTOR Dinah Lone / 020 7501 6689
PICTURE EDITOR Sunita Sharma-Gibson / 020 7501 6369
AUDIO EDITOR Andrew Everard
EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR Libby McPhee
LIBRARIAN Richard Farr
THANKS TO Hannah Nepil and Charlotte Gardner
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF James Jolly

ADVERTISING

Phone 020 7738 5454 Fax 020 7733 2325
email gramophone.ads@markallengroup.com
COMMERCIAL MANAGER
Esther Zuke / 020 7501 6368
SALES EXECUTIVE
Simon Davies / 020 7501 6373

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES

0800 137201 (UK) +44 (0)1722 716997 (overseas)
subscriptions@markallengroup.com

PUBLISHING

Phone 020 7738 5454
HEAD OF MARKETING AND DIGITAL
STRATEGY Luca Da Re / 020 7501 6362
MARKETING MANAGER Edward Craggs / 020 7501 6384
DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT Matthew Cianfarani
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Richard Hamshire / 01722 716997
PRODUCTION MANAGER Jon Redmayne
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Sally Boettcher / 01722 716997
SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER Chris Hoskins / 01722 716997
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Martin Cullingford
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Paul Geoghegan
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Ben Allen
CHAIRMAN Mark Allen



A MARK ALLEN GROUP COMPANY

www.markallengroup.com

GRAMOPHONE is published by
MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, St Jude's Church,
Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, United Kingdom.
gramophone.co.uk
email gramophone@markallengroup.com or
subscriptions@markallengroup.com
ISSN 0017-310X

The July issue of *Gramophone* is on sale from June 21; the
August issue will be on sale from July 19 (both UK). Every
effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of statements in
this magazine but we cannot accept responsibility for errors
or omissions, or for matters arising from clerical or printers'
errors, or an advertiser not completing his contract.
Regarding concert listings, all information is correct at the
time of going to press. Letters to the editor requiring a
personal reply should be accompanied by a stamped addressed
envelope. We have made every effort to secure permission to
use copyright material. Where material has been used
inadvertently or we have been unable to trace the copyright
owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue.

UK subscription rate £64.

Printed in England by Southernprint.

North American edition (ISSN 0017-310X):
Gramophone, USPS 881080, is published monthly with
an additional issue in September by MA Music Leisure
& Travel Ltd, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London
SE24 0PB, United Kingdom. The US annual subscription
price is \$89. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by
agent named Air Business, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc.,
156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434,
USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431.
US Postmaster: Send address changes to *Gramophone*,
Worldnet Shipping Inc. (see above). Subscription records
are maintained at MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, Unit
A Buildings 1-5, Dinton Business Park, Catherine Ford
Road, Dinton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5HZ, UK. Air
Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

© MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, 2017. All rights reserved.
No part of the *Gramophone* may be reproduced, stored in a
retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise
without prior written permission of the Publishing Director.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the
editor or *Gramophone*. Advertisements in the journal do not
imply endorsement of the products or services advertised.



When you have finished with
this magazine please recycle it.

EDITOR'S CHOICE 7

The 12 most highly recommended recordings
of the month

FOR THE RECORD 8

The latest classical music news

Reviews

RECORDING OF THE MONTH 28

I Fagiolini and Robert Hollingworth's
glorious reconstruction of an alternative
Monteverdi *Vespers*

ORCHESTRAL 30

Emil Jonason plays Lindberg and Golijov; Mozart
from Simone Dinnerstein; Richard Strauss from
Aldeburgh; Anthony Marwood's Walton

CHAMBER 48

Arensky piano trios; Delius and Elgar from the
Villiers Quartet; Keleman and Kocsis play Kreisler

INSTRUMENTAL 58

A Liszt recital from Dejan Lazić; vintage
Rachmaninov; Elisabeth Plank's debut harp disc;
a Russian showcase from Alexandre Kantorow

VOCAL 68

Dvořák from Antoni Wit; melodies by Fernand
de La Tombelle; Swann songs; Sophie Bevan's
collaboration with Ian Page and The Mozartists

REISSUES 80

Erato's 65-disc celebration of the artistry of
André Cluytens

OPERA 84

Graun arias from Julia Lezhneva; Mayr's
Telemaco; the Hallé's *Parsifal* with Sir Mark Elder

JAZZ & WORLD MUSIC 91

Reviews from our sister titles *Jazzwise* and *Songlines*

REPLAY 94

An epic Russian anthology; Schuricht on Decca

BOOKS 96

Reflections of harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick;
a Van Cliburn double bill

GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION 104

David Vickers marks the Telemann anniversary
by surveying the recordings of his *Musique de table*

NEW RELEASES 126

REVIEWS INDEX 128



Features

KARAJAN'S RING CYCLE 10

Fifty years since Karajan recorded Wagner's
Ring cycle for DG, Hugo Shirley revisits the
groundbreaking project: what does it tell us
about Karajan's approach to both the music
and to the art of recording itself?

HERBERT BLOMSTEDT 18

As the acclaimed conductor turns 90, Philip Clark
meets him in Leipzig to talk about Beethoven and
to look back over his extraordinary career

VÉRONIQUE GENS 22

The French soprano talks to Richard Lawrence
about her new Alpha recording which celebrates
women in 19th-century opera and oratorio

THE MUSICIAN & THE SCORE 46

Alice Coote explores Mahler's beautiful and
intense *Rückert-Lieder* song-cycle with James Jolly

ICONS 56

A tribute to Sir Malcolm Sargent, the British
conductor, to mark half a century since his death

CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS 66

Arnold Whittall profiles Howard Skempton
and recommends some fascinating listening

MUSICAL CONNECTIONS 93

Two Karajan-inspired listening journeys

CLASSICS RECONSIDERED 100

Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Award-winning 1991
Beethoven *Missa solemnis* goes under the spotlight

THE SPECIALIST'S GUIDE 102

Concertos arranged for piano and orchestra

PERFORMANCES & EVENTS 110

The best live music on radio and online

HIGH FIDELITY 113

A one-box audio solution, and a network system
from a new name to the UK

LETTERS & OBITUARIES 122

Remembering conductor Jiří Bělohlávek

MY MUSIC 130

Broadcaster Jon Snow on his musical passions

SINGAPORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

A NEW SEASON 2017/18



HIGHLIGHTS WITH OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR LAN SHUI

Brahms Symphony Cycle
Brahms: Schicksalslied and
Gesang der Parzen
Puccini: La Bohème in concert
Mahler, Tchaikovsky, Bartók,
Bruckner and more

HIGHLIGHTS WITH OUR PRINCIPAL GUEST CONDUCTOR ANDREW LITTON

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4
Copland: Symphony No. 3
Beethoven: Triple Concerto in C

OUR GUESTS

Lang Lang
Diana Damrau
Janine Jansen
Leonidas Kavakos
Gil Shaham
Steven Isserlis
Eliahu Inbal

CELEBRATING BERNSTEIN AT 100

West Side Story (Live Movie)

CELEBRATING ASEAN@50

Narong Prangcharoen
Tengku Irfan
Diana Soh
Kelly Tang
Tan Chan Boon
Er Yenn Chwen

CELEBRATING FINLAND@100

Okko Kamu
Elina Vähälä



SSO.ORG.SG

— INTRODUCING —



A landmark in Streaming History
The best music subscription in the world



**STREAMING
IN HI-RES 24-BIT**

(Up to 192 kHz)*

Worldwide premiere

+



DOWNLOAD

From 30% to 60% permanent discount
on 24-Bit Hi-Res download



- + The largest Hi-Res catalogue : 70 000 albums in 24-Bit Hi-Res for download and streaming
- + More than 40 million tracks in FLAC 16-Bit / 44.1kHz (CD quality)
- + And the complete Qobuz experience (editorial content, articles, reviews, booklets...)

* on more than 90% of the Hi-Res catalogue.

Discover more

on www.qobuz.com/sublime-gramophone

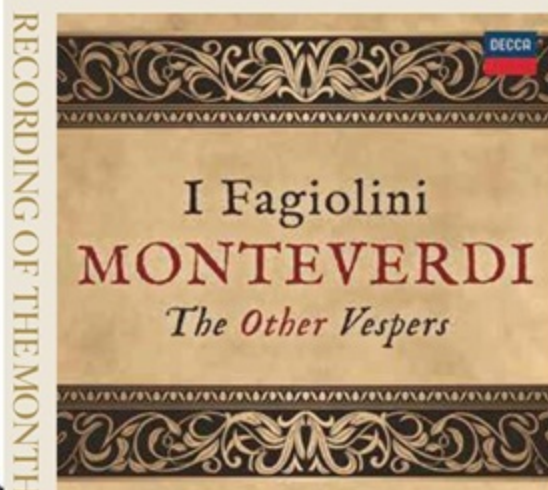
& experience Hi-Res Streaming with our free playlist



qobuz

GRAMOPHONE *Editor's choice*

Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings from this month's reviews



MONTEVERDI
'The Other Vespers'
I Fagiolini /
Robert Hollingworth
Decca
► **DAVID VICKERS'S**
REVIEW IS ON
PAGE 28

From such an inventive ensemble, we'd have expected something both imaginative and impressive to mark Monteverdi's 450th anniversary: I Fagiolini do not disappoint!



BRAHMS Violin
Concerto. Violin Sonata
No 1. 'F-A-E' Scherzo
Vadim Gluzman *vn*
Angela Yoffe *pf* Lucerne
SO / James Gaffigan
BIS

Whether in concerto or sonata, Vadim Gluzman proves himself a violinist of fine tone, calm control and virtuosity.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 30**



HANDEL Water Music
Göttingen Festival
Orchestra /
Laurence Cummings
Accent
Delightful playing

from the Göttingen Festival Orchestra under Laurence Cummings, full of vitality and embodying a truly joyful sense of rapport.

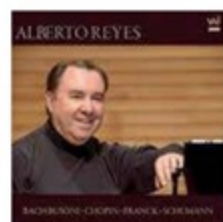
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 35**



LECLAIR
Violin Concertos
Europa Galante /
Fabio Biondi *vn*
Glossa

There's an air of refinement and graceful confidence in these recordings of concertos by French Baroque composer Jean-Marie Leclair that just feels completely appropriate.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 36**



ALBERTO REYES
Piano Recital
Alberto Reyes *pf*
VAI
It 'may be his best yet', says Jed Distler

in praising the latest recording from Uruguayan pianist Alberto Reyes, a musician who evidently should be much better known to us all.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 64**



FAURÉ 'The Complete Songs, Vol 2'
Soloists;
Malcolm Martineau *pf*
Signum
Volume 2 in

Malcolm Martineau's survey of Fauré's songs pairs some whole cycles with rarities, and follows the first in offering listeners some superb singing.

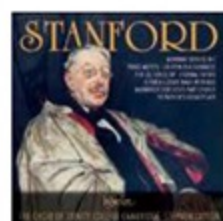
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 70**



MACHAUT
'Sovereign Beauty'
The Orlando Consort
Hyperion
This wonderful disc – the latest in

The Orlando Consort's exploration of Machaut – unites a programme of well-chosen works with performances (and a recording) of great eloquence and clarity.

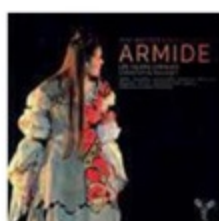
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 73**



STANFORD
Choral Works
The Choir of Trinity
College, Cambridge /
Stephen Layton
Hyperion

A celebration of Stanford's link with Trinity – many of his works were written for the chapel – and of this impressive choir under Stephen Layton's leadership.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 76**



LULLY Armide
Les Talens Lyriques /
Christophe Rousset
Aparté
Leading Lully interpreter

Christophe Rousset has assembled an excellent cast for a performance rich in exquisite singing, drama and dancelike momentum.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 84**



'VISIONS'
Véronique Gens *sop*
Munich Radio Orchestra /
Hervé Niquet
Alpha
Admirers of

Véronique Gens will know what to expect: namely powerful characterisation, emotional commitment and singing of deeply moving beauty.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 90**



DVD/BLU-RAY
VERDI Un ballo in maschera
Sols incl Ricciarelli & Domingo;
Royal Opera, Covent Garden / Claudio Abbado
Opus Arte

An archive release from Covent Garden, 1975, featuring music-making from such greats as Plácido Domingo and, in the pit, Claudio Abbado.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 87**



REISSUE/ARCHIVE
RACHMANINOV
'The Edison Recordings'
Sergey Rachmaninov *pf*
Naxos

A valuable glimpse into the sound world and artistry of one of history's greatest pianists.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 63**



Listen to many of the Editor's Choice recordings online at **qobuz.com**

FOR THE RECORD



Artist of the Year nominees (left to right): Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Isabelle Faust, Lars Vogt and Sol Gabetta

Who do you think should be Gramophone's Artist of the Year?

The voting for the recording awards is well under way – a process culminating, of course, in the 2017 *Gramophone* Recording of the Year – and our critics are spending their summer months listening to the 72 recordings (six discs in 12 categories) that have made it to Round 2. But now the hunt is on for the 2017 *Gramophone* Artist of the Year – and choosing the winner is up to you!

Each year we ask our readers and visitors to our website to vote for our new Artist of the Year and this year we've another 10 musicians for you to consider. We've drawn up a shortlist of artists who, we feel, have made a particularly strong impression this past year, and whose contribution – particularly as represented on recordings – has been exceptional.

Last year we were drawing your attention to the extraordinary wealth of pianists performing and recording at the moment. Streaming sites all remark on the popularity of pianists when it comes to playlists and, for 2016, an extraordinary talent leaped into the ring and carried off the Artist of the Year title; he was Daniil Trifonov (and this year his album of Liszt Études entitled 'Transcendental' features in Round 2). Three fine pianists are represented on the 2017 shortlist, which is drawn up by *Gramophone's* editors.

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, no stranger to the Awards, is one of those artists who have been known to pianophiles for

many years, but his signing to Chandos 10 years ago put him on a broader musical map and he has treated us to magnificent recordings of, first, French repertoire and more recently the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. He is a pianist with so much to say, as witnessed by his deeply impressive Beethoven piano sonata series. Another pianist championed by Chandos is **Imogen Cooper**, one of the UK's most cultivated and sensitive exponents of the Classical and early-Romantic repertoire; this year she turned her attention to Chopin with characteristically imaginative results. A pianist (and increasingly conductor) who has long drawn great reviews from our pages is **Lars Vogt**, and this year he has been heard solo (in Bach), in chamber music with the magnificent Christian Tetzlaff and as pianist-conductor launching a new series of the Beethoven piano concertos.

A trio of string players makes this year's shortlist. A former *Gramophone* Young Artist, the violinist **Isabelle Faust** continues to grow as a musician with every concert and recording, and her Harmonia Mundi discs of Mozart violin concertos and Franck's Violin Sonata gave a superb snapshot of her considerable artistry and style. Two of the great violin concertos came courtesy of **Lisa Batiashvili** in performances of enormous maturity and originality: supported by Daniel Barenboim's fine Staatskapelle Berlin forces, the Sibelius and Tchaikovsky concertos once more

made the impact that their composers must have envisaged. The cellist **Sol Gabetta**, another former *Gramophone* Young Artist, has already given us a superb recording of the Elgar Cello Concerto, but this year she returned to it in the company of the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle and, if anything, has bettered that earlier fine achievement. Coupled with Martinů's concerto (on the CD) and orchestral works on the DVD, this is a treasurable memento of a highly gifted player.

The soprano **Carolyn Sampson**, winner of the Recital Award a couple of years ago, features on no fewer than three Round 2 recordings (Purcell songs, Haydn's *The Seasons* and Mozart's Mass in C minor) and is clearly at the peak of her powers – a lovely singer and a much-loved member of any ensemble or cast. The baritone **Matthias Goerne** is established firmly in the great German Lieder tradition, a place consolidated by his ever-more probing encounters for Harmonia Mundi with the central Austro-German song repertoire. His Brahms collection, including a truly terrific *Vier ernste Gesänge*, in the company of Christoph Eschenbach, is the most recent in a series of shattering musical experiences.

Mahan Esfahani entered the field of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* – a work that, once again, seems to be more popular with pianists – with a performance that shows the superb marriage of head and heart that infuses his music-making. It's a work that never fails to test the resources, both technical and intellectual, of its interpreters, and Esfahani rose magnificently to the challenge.

Just one conductor makes the shortlist this year, but when someone can take on two of the most performed symphonies in the repertoire (Tchaikovsky's Nos 4 and 6, alongside the less-often encountered No 3) and make them sound entirely new – and astoundingly original – then it's time to sit up. **Vasily Petrenko**, installed in Oslo as well as with his beloved Liverpool orchestra, is certainly on the ascent, and his way with Russian repertoire remains enormously compelling.

So, that's the field. Go to **gramophone.co.uk**, listen and watch our 10 nominees in action and then cast your vote. All will be revealed at the *Gramophone* Awards ceremony on September 13.

IN THE STUDIO

All-star cast assembles for Berlioz's *Les Troyens*

The veteran of eight productions of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, John Nelson has recorded Berlioz's epic opera in Strasbourg with a magnificent line-up of singers assembled by Erato's President and A&R supremo, Alain Lanceron. Headed by Michael Spyres (Enée), Marie-Nicole Lemieux (Cassandre) and Joyce DiDonato (Didon), the cast recorded the opera in two concert performances with substantial patching sessions.

This will be the first complete *Trojans* (and not a note has been cut) with a French orchestra (the Strasbourg Philharmonic), and another instalment in John Nelson's series of acclaimed Berlioz recordings made for Virgin Classics (now Erato).

Other singers included Stéphane Degout (Chorèbe), Marianne Crebassa (Ascanie), Philippe Sly (Panthée), Cyrille Dubois (Iopas) and Stanislas de Barbeyrac, newly signed to Erato, as Hylas. The set is due out this autumn.

Onyx Brass record 46 20th-century British fanfares

Conductor John Wilson and Onyx Brass descended on St Jude's Church, Hampstead, to record an unusual programme of 46 fanfares composed in the 20th century by 14 different British composers. The album features many premiere recordings, and includes fanfares by Malcolm Arnold, Arnold Bax, Michael Tippett, Herbert Howells and Eric Coates. The album was recorded by Chandos and is due for release in March 2018.

RPS Awards honour excellence in live music-making in the UK

The Royal Philharmonic Society honoured some of the most innovative and inspiring artists, ensembles and organisations in British live music-making at their annual Awards. While the recipients included international stars such as Finnish soprano Karita Mattila in the Singer category (for performances in Janáček's *Jenůfa* at the Royal Festival Hall and *The Makropoulos Case* at the BBC Proms), the ceremony was most notable for giving welcome and highly deserved attention to projects, artists and organisations spread throughout the regions of the UK.

A good evening for Scottish festivals saw both the Lammermuir and East Neuk festivals honoured, while further south, Leeds-based Opera North was acclaimed for its *Ring* Cycle. That latter project's conductor Richard Farnes proved a particularly popular choice for the gathered audience at London's Brewery when he was announced as winner of the Conductor Award.

Another recipient to receive rapturous ovation was pianist Joseph Middleton, winner in the Young Artist category, who spoke of his gratitude for the musical opportunities offered him through his local comprehensive school, and the importance of making sure music remained a readily available part of education today. Exemplifying the idea of openness of music to everyone, the South-West Open Youth Orchestra, whose work with disabled musicians has really pioneered performance possibilities for all, received the Learning and Participation prize.

GRAMOPHONE *Online*

The magazine is just the beginning
Visit gramophone.co.uk for...

PODCASTS

Subscribe to *Gramophone's* Podcasts on iTunes or Mixcloud to enjoy fascinating interviews with leading classical recording artists. Recent episodes include an ear-opening insight into the ondes martenot from Cynthia Miller (pictured), who demonstrates the more unusual sonic capabilities of this



most unusual of instruments and what it was like working with Thomas Adès on his new opera *The Exterminating Angel*. And if you enjoy this, don't forget you can also download the podcasts from the past few months too, including Editor-in-Chief James Jolly talking to Ian Page, the founder and Artistic Director of The Classical Opera Company, about 'Mozart 250', a year-by-year survey of Mozart's life, time and works, plus pianist Dejan Lazic talking to Editor Martin Cullingford about his new recording on the Onyx label, 'Life, Love & Afterlife: a Liszt recital'.

FACEBOOK & TWITTER

Follow us to hear about - and then discuss with our online community - the latest classical music news, plus get immediate updates when new articles are published.



Joyce DiDonato stars in a forthcoming recording of Berlioz's epic *Les Troyens*, conducted by John Nelson



Karajan holding aloft Donner's hammer and, right, playing Sieglinde to Vickers's Siegmund in rehearsals for the first Salzburg Easter Festival's *Die Walküre*

Still wielding
**THE RING'S
POWER**

Recorded 50 years ago, Karajan's interpretation tends to be overshadowed by Solti's – but it needs to be judged on its own terms, writes **Hugo Shirley**

There's a famous photograph taken in 1967, during rehearsals for the first Salzburg Easter Festival's production of *Die Walküre*. It shows the tenor Jon Vickers kneeling. Herbert von Karajan, playing Sieglinde to his Siegmund, is collapsed in front of him. Vickers cradles the maestro. They look longingly into each other's eyes.

For anyone unfamiliar with the image, seeing Karajan – the grand, autocratic chief conductor of the mighty Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra – on his knees on a rehearsal stage might be a shock. Karajan's background as a man of the theatre has, in the Anglophone world at least, often been overshadowed by his reputation as a stately conductor primarily of the great symphonic repertoire.

Look more closely, though, and you'll also see a small portable tape recorder on the stage. What is it doing there? What was on the tape? Those who are familiar with the history of Karajan's *Ring* – both on record and in the theatre – and the conductor's subsequent *modus operandi* with productions at the Salzburg Easter Festival might hazard a guess. The likely answer is that it's his own recording of *Die Walküre*, made for Deutsche Grammophon the previous autumn.

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who would record Wotan in Karajan's *Das Rheingold* in December 1967, writes in his memoirs of the conductor's 'most practical and voice-friendly way of rehearsing, which would often call upon an earlier recording. In his left hand Karajan would hold a cassette player, which he would rewind as he needed, and let us act according to his musical and scenic wishes without

the need for time-consuming consultation with a rehearsal pianist.'

It's a process that Gundula Janowitz, one of the few surviving members of Karajan's *Ring* cast and Vickers's actual Sieglinde (as well as Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung*), recalls clearly when I meet her in Vienna to discuss recording and performing *Die Walküre*. 'The recording was done five or six months before the [stage] rehearsals began,' she remembers. 'When those rehearsals started, the tape

'At Salzburg, Karajan the producer gave visual shape to what Karajan the conductor had already achieved in the studios' –

Andrew Porter, critic

was played. You heard yourself and could act while saving your voice. We only started to sing in the last five or six rehearsals. Initially it was constantly a matter of, "Stop! Let's do it this way." When you have to sing again each time, it can be very demanding.' Was she bothered by having to hear her own voice constantly? Clearly not: 'Many say, "Oh! How dreadful!" I don't do that sort of hysteria,' she laughs. 'Nor did I listen to myself singing and say, "Isn't that so wonderful?" – as many might have done!'

This year marks a double anniversary. It's been 50 years since that first Salzburg Easter Festival, recently commemorated in April by a revival of Karajan's production of *Die Walküre* with Christian Thielemann conducting the Staatskapelle Dresden. But it's also 50 years since the release of Karajan's recording of the same opera, followed in the next three years by the release of the subsequent instalments: *Das Rheingold* in 1968, followed in 1969 and 1970 by *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* respectively. To celebrate this half-century, Deutsche Grammophon is re-releasing the whole cycle on Blu-ray audio, prompting us to listen afresh.

BEGINNINGS

First, though, it's worth exploring the procedure, mentioned above, that would become the standard not just for the subsequent *Ring* operas, but also for all Karajan's later productions and recordings at the Salzburg Easter Festival. It might seem unusual, even strangely back-to-front from a modern point of view, to record a work ahead of performing it. But the method has its origins in a characteristic mixture of idealism and pragmatism, while reflecting the conductor's canny negotiating skill and awareness of the potential of technology.

It also reflects in practical terms how the Salzburg Easter Festival came into being. It was always Wagner that was at the heart of Karajan's idea, the conductor's desire to stage *The Ring* under the best conditions possible being the driving force. He had been dissatisfied by his attempts to produce *The Ring* at the Vienna Staatsoper, where he had been artistic



director from 1957 to 1964. In addition, Wagner's operas, due to competition from Bayreuth, were unofficially off-limits for the main Salzburg Festival, where Karajan already reigned supreme. The Berlin Philharmonic, which had been unequivocally *his* orchestra for over a decade, was to play in the pit, trained up especially for the occasion. The major question: where would it take place?

Geneva's newly refurbished Grand Théâtre was briefly mooted, but quickly discounted. Then, according to the standard account, Karajan had a flash of inspiration while conducting Franco Zeffirelli's lavish Salzburg Festival production of *Boris Godunov* (so lavish that it was alternately dubbed either *The Tsar and I* or *My Fair Boris*) in the summer of 1965: his hometown's own Grosses Festspielhaus, a state-of-the-art auditorium with a remarkable wide-screen stage, would provide the perfect venue.

A combination of good timing and Karajan's own string-pulling prowess (not to mention his not-inconsiderable personal wealth) meant that the plans could be put together quickly. Karajan's own Salzburg heritage did no harm either, and he managed to negotiate to take over the Festspielhaus for the necessary periods at cost. A co-producing arrangement with



Karajan rehearses with his Sieglinde (Gundula Janowitz) and Brünnhilde (Régine Crespin)

festival to survive without any state subsidy – or intervention. Karajan himself would also serve as stage director, with designs by Günther Schneider-Siemssen and George Wakhevitch.

THE RING RACE

Karajan's *Ring* could therefore hardly have been conceived more differently to that other famous studio *Ring* of the period, Georg Solti's, recorded in Vienna by Decca. And those differences are only emphasised by their chronological closeness: Karajan's *Walküre* was recorded just a year after Solti's *Walküre* (the final instalment of his cycle). Nor was the closeness merely chronological: the Vienna Philharmonic drew its players from the orchestra of the Staatsoper, where Karajan had, while artistic director, conducted *The Ring* on multiple occasions.

In the January 1969 issue of *Gramophone*, shortly after Karajan's cycle had reached its halfway mark, Desmond Shawe-Taylor seemed to acknowledge these proximities. 'Decca must be feeling like the man who first ran the mile in four minutes', he wrote in his Quarterly Review column, 'only to find his miraculous feat soon equalled and even surpassed by other athletes.' When reviewing the much-delayed release of Wilhelm Furtwängler's Rome *Ring* on EMI three years later in September 1972, Deryck Cooke included a discussion of the Solti recording as well as the one 'masterminded' by Karajan: 'It came second,' he said of the latter, 'and in my opinion, despite many virtues...it does in fact *come* second to the Decca.'



Actively involved at every step: Karajan the director and man of the theatre in rehearsal at the Salzburg Easter Festival

But the idea of there being any competition, at least as far as Karajan was concerned, seems unlikely, according to Karajan biographer and *Gramophone* critic Richard Osborne. Decca's recording certainly took place in 'Karajan's backyard', he tells me. 'But what was Karajan thinking at this time? I don't think he was remotely concerned. He was a very patient man: I'm sure he thought he would record a *Ring* cycle in the fullness of time. And nobody knew at first that the Decca would become the great thing it did.'

The vividness of the Solti *Ring*, famously enhanced by producer John Culshaw's special effects and a cast consisting of the greatest stereo-era Wagnerians, has nevertheless overshadowed Karajan's achievement. But it has done so in complex ways. The Solti recording has always, for example, been seen as 'dramatic'; Karajan's, with its famously beautiful orchestral playing, chamber music-like clarity and apparently esoteric casting, has tended to be seen as 'undramatic' by comparison. The aims of the Solti *Ring* have always been straightforward, explained in *Ring Resounding*, Culshaw's rip-roaring account of the recording; the aims of the Karajan *Ring*, with no similar retrospective pronouncements from its progenitor, have seemed a great deal less clear.

'Everyone was skeptical that I was doing Sieglinde. Everyone asked, Why? It's a lyrical voice!' – Gundula Janowitz

Andrew Porter was surely conveying a profound truth about the priorities of Karajan's conception, however, when he reviewed the Salzburg *Ring*'s transfer to New York. 'In the Berlin studios...he would undertake the detailed work, the paragraph-by-paragraph polishing involved in the making of a record,' he wrote. 'Then at Salzburg, at Easter, it would all join together while Karajan the producer gave visual shape to what Karajan the conductor had achieved.'

LYRICAL COSMOS?

The visual shape Karajan the producer presented was famously beautiful, gauzy and (according to many) dark. What was it, though, that Karajan the conductor achieved in the studio? In the first instance, it seems to have been a consolidation of the approach, built on orchestral clarity and verbal detail, that one can already hear in his recordings from Bayreuth in 1951: a *Walküre* (only Act 3, although the whole opera can be heard unofficially) and the famous *Meistersinger*.

Fascinating footage from Deutsche Grammophon's archive (included in Eric Schulz's 2013 documentary, *Karajan: The Second Life*) shows Karajan working at the piano with Thomas Stewart (Wotan in *Die Walküre* and the Wanderer in *Siegfried*), always emphasising the words over any vocal concerns. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Karajan's *Rheingold* Wotan on disc (Stewart sang the role in Salzburg), writes of how he learnt the whole part with Karajan in advance, the conductor later thanking him for having managed to realise the character as 'a renaissance man, as he had pictured him in his mind'. During the sessions, Janowitz recalls, Karajan barely ever looked at the score: he mouthed along with all the words and concentrated on bringing out precisely what he wanted from his singers.

A complementary perspective is offered by Andreas Blau, who retired as principal flautist of the Berlin Philharmonic in 2015 after having joined the orchestra in 1969. He recalls his involvement in the *Götterdämmerung* sessions and how Karajan

OPUS ARTE

GLYNDEBOURNE

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA ROSSINI

DVD | BLU-RAY



The 'sheer visual sophistication' of Annabel Arden's *Barbiere* serves 'a triumphant celebration of Rossini's musical genius', featuring de Niese's 'powerfully sung' Rosina, Bürger's 'gale-force' Figaro and Stayton's 'pure and mellifluous' Almaviva – a leading trio 'musically and dramatically beyond compare' (The Independent ★★★★★). With Enrique Mazzola at the helm of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, 'the score bubbles along on a Puckish current of merry mischief' (The Telegraph).

BÉATRICE ET BÉNÉDICT BERLIOZ

DVD | BLU-RAY



Through the eye of French director Laurent Pelly this expression of Berlioz's undying admiration for the Bard – his adaptation of *Much Ado about Nothing* as an opéra comique – becomes 'an elegant treatise on love and music designed in shades of grey with 50s-era costumes' (Sunday Express ★★★★★). Paul Appleby sings as Bénédicte and Stéphanie d'Oustrac makes a fiery Béatrice.

HANDEL GIULIO CESARE RINALDO SAUL

5 DVD SET
4 BLU-RAY SET



This set brings together three of Handel's most compelling works for the stage in lavish Glyndebourne productions featuring period-instrument accompaniment from the renowned Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. David McVicar, Robert Carsen and Barrie Kosky direct.

opusarte.com



港樂
HKPhil

Principal Patron

SWIRE

HONG KONG PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
WAGNER'S RING CYCLE PART 4

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG



"A Ring from Hong Kong to take on the world" Gramophone

Gun-Brit Barkmin
Brünnhilde

Daniel Brenna
Siegfried

Shen Yang
Gunther

Mikhail Petrenko
Hagen

Amanda Majeski
Gutrune

Michelle DeYoung
Waltraute

Peter Kálmán
Alberich

18 & 21 JAN 2018 Thu 6pm & Sun 3pm

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$1,080 \$880 \$580 \$380

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT www.urbtix.hk FROM 15 JULY 2017!

JAAP VAN ZWEDEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is a Venue Partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre.

hkphil.org



Günther Schneider-Siemssen, the conductor's favourite set designer, provided the striking backdrops for the Karajan Ring cycle at Salzburg (Die Walküre, above)

would always make the orchestra accompany: 'He would pull the orchestra back for the singers so that they didn't have to sing at full power all the time. But they still had to be *dramatic*.' Blau himself describes the sound as 'extremely transparent but also dramatic and powerful when it needed to be'. He also remembers his father-in-law, principal trumpet in the orchestra and a regular in the pit at Bayreuth, describing the overall sound as being like no other Wagner sound he had experienced before.

This sound was summed up in descriptions of Karajan's *Ring* as conjuring up a 'lyrical cosmos', a term that certainly captures the beauty of the orchestral playing but which underplays the sense of drama – a sense of drama that's admittedly different to Solti's – that Karajan set out to achieve. For musicologist John Deathridge, shortly to publish a new translation of *The Ring* for Penguin, this is indeed best understood in terms of the conductor's attention to the text. 'The detail in the recording is really quite remarkable,'

'He'd pull the orchestra back so the singers didn't have to use full power. But they still had to be dramatic' – Andreas Blau, flautist

Deathridge explains, going on to note the significance of the fact that, after *Lohengrin*, the composer rarely included any indications in the vocal lines. 'Wagner is assuming that conductors will understand that there's a dialectic between the expression marks in the orchestra and the vocal line. Karajan manages to get this relationship between the two in a more

intimate way than the other recordings.' This is immediately apparent in *Rheingold*, he continues. 'You've got these people snarling at each other into the microphone, but that's

exactly what the orchestra is telling the singers to do. It's the most aggressive, violent interpretation I know – and it's coming from Karajan, Mr Smoothy himself.'

In *Götterdämmerung* we have what Shawe-Taylor described as 'something most unusual, a highly civilised, *bel canto* Hagen' (4/71). But Karl Ridderbusch's performance, Deathridge says, 'is a marvellous idea, which I'd misunderstood myself initially. He sounds like Fischer-Dieskau at first, because he's trying to



Herbert von Karajan and Deutsche Grammophon returned to Berlin's Jesus-Christus-Kirche as the recording venue for the Ring cycle

persuade these people to do things. But gradually, during the course of the piece, he changes: when he throws Siegfried's body in front of Guttrune in the Third Act, then he comes out as snarling and vicious.'

These effects are made all the more powerful by the patience Karajan exercises throughout the performances as a whole – a willingness to unleash drama fiercely but economically. But it's also an approach that is designed specifically for records, for the intimacy that they can promote. Karajan himself once wrote that recordings could offer an experience away from the cacophony of public performance: 'In such circumstances I praise the peace of my room where I am free of all disturbance.' But if Harold Rosenthal in *Opera* once described how, listening to Solti's *Das Rheingold*, one could 'pretend to be Ludwig of Bavaria... having a full performance of a Wagner opera especially for oneself', Deathridge views the Karajan *Ring* differently: 'He wants to have it like a novel that you read at home in the armchair – a long novel by Tolstoy, really epic in conception.'

CASTING ASPERSIONS

Traditionally, one of the main problems with Karajan's *Ring* has been the singers he chose, the assumption being that, coming second in the 'Ring race', his hand was forced. It was clear, for example, that Birgit Nilsson would not be able to record Brünnhilde again so soon after having done so with Solti – and her somewhat unrealistic alternative idea, expressed in a letter to Rudolf Bing, to sing Sieglinde on the new recording would certainly have upset the balance of Karajan's lyrical universe.

But Richard Osborne is doubtful that Karajan would even have wanted Nilsson (whom he'd conducted as Brünnhilde several times in Vienna) in the first place. 'I'm not sure she was his kind of singer,' he tells me. And it's a statement backed up by what the characteristically acute Christa Ludwig (Waltraute for both Solti's and Karajan's recordings

of *Götterdämmerung*) told Osborne for his biography of the conductor: 'The fact that Birgit tended to sing sharp when in full flood worried Karajan less than the fact that it wasn't an especially moulded

'Karajan wants to have it like a long novel by Tolstoy, really epic in conception'

– John Deathridge, musicologist

sound, or a very human one.' He cast Régine Crespin as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* instead, Osborne suggests, in an attempt to recapture the impression left by his favourite Isolde, Germaine Lubin.

Janowitz's luminously lyrical Sieglinde is another emblematic piece of casting. 'Everyone was skeptical that I was doing it,' she explains. 'Everyone asked, "Why? It's a lyrical voice!"' But Karajan really wanted two young people standing on the stage [as Siegmund and Sieglinde], for it to be sung naturally rather than a matter of – she unleashes a mock bellow – 'Höööööööö!' The transfer of the productions to the Met in New York was in some ways preordained to failure, given the significant differences between festival timetables and those of an everyday opera house, but Janowitz also recalls how Karajan's casting was seen as a disappointment there. 'There they wanted really big voices: "Hojotoho! Hojotoho!"'

Janowitz remembers with clear fondness the intimacy of the exchanges with the 'wonderful' Vickers: 'Such a personality, he sang for *me*. Everything [on stage] was said to me, and he listened to me too, whenever *I* was saying anything.' The

way the soprano switches to the word 'say' rather than 'sing' is telling, reflecting the pointedly conversational way with the text that was clearly so important to the conductor. And this is arguably where the casting causes slight problems, with some singers not always able to rise to the cycle's more 'operatic' moments. Fischer-Dieskau's Lieder-like *Rheingold* Wotan (much of it, according to his memoirs, patched on after the main sessions were over) comes up short on godlike amplitude; while Helga Dernesch's Brünnhilde in the final two instalments and the Siegfrieds of Jess Thomas (*Siegfried*) and Helge Brilioth (*Götterdämmerung*) are generally agreed to be outstandingly communicative but ultimately lacking in tragic grandeur and the sheer vocal heft that Wagner does occasionally call for.

Karajan achieves a consolidation of the approach, built on orchestral clarity and verbal detail, that one can hear in 1951

More broadly, though, Karajan's casting decisions, and his subtle, detailed approach to recording *The Ring* overall, has perhaps been coloured by his reputation for being, in the English-speaking world at least, primarily a symphonic conductor. This lies in stark contrast to the profile that Solti enjoyed in the UK as music director of Covent Garden for a decade from 1961. As Osborne points out, this was 'at the very time that Karajan, who *had* enjoyed a high profile in London because of the Philharmonia Orchestra, was no longer appearing in London, except for sweeping in with the Vienna Philharmonic or Berlin Philharmonic on tour. And of course he'd never conducted opera in London.'

FULL CIRCLE

But Karajan had been conducting *The Ring* for nearly three decades when he took it into the studio, and it's important to understand his recording as much – or even more – in relation to this earlier history as to what came later. And we must do this even if, overall, Karajan's *Ring* seems full of paradoxes: on the one hand, it's as an attempt to create a sense of light-footed spontaneity that should bear repeated listening, to offer minute verbal detail against a grandly symphonic sweep; on the other, it can be viewed as an account of the grandest of all music dramas, that should, arguably, be 'read' like a novel.

Recent discourse on *Ring* recordings tends to throw up its hands at the very impossibility of capturing the work adequately in the studio. It is suspicious of the idealism, both technological and musical, that informed such enterprises. We opt increasingly instead for the distantly echoing theatrical reality of live recordings, where microphones are but impassive, disinterested witnesses of history.

Yet it's no more possible to capture the full scope and possibility of *The Ring* in the theatre as it is in the recording studio – or even on screen, as Karajan's misjudged *Rheingold* film, finally produced at crippling expense in the late 1970s, shows. If we can embrace this fact, and admire and understand the ambition behind it, then Karajan's recording of the cycle – as much as Solti's more famous one – can be appreciated for using the studio to explore this towering masterpiece from a unique and fascinating perspective. Half a century later, this is a recording that can still offer up surprises. ⑥

Deutsche Grammophon's remastered edition of Karajan's recording of Wagner's *Ring* on Blu-ray (479 7354) is out now

NEW ARTIST SIGNINGS ON DELPHIAN



DCD34194

Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli:
Sonate da Camera Nos 1–6
Bojan Čičić violin, The Illyria Consort

The quality of Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli's music speaks for itself – virtuosic and joyously melodic, these six 'chamber sonatas' had a huge impact on Delphian producer Paul Baxter. For a neo-Corellian, Carbonelli is unusually fond of complexity, both technical and compositional, and also unusually open to other contemporary influences, such as those of Handel and Vivaldi. Its technical difficulty has ensured that his work is seldom played, but early-music rising star Bojan Čičić thrillingly overcomes all obstacles as he and his Illyria Consort colleagues champion these groundbreaking compositions with exuberant confidence.

'articulation so smart you could cut a finger on it, a rich tonal range... String playing of real vitality, rhythmic verve and dramatic engagement'

— The Spectator, August 2015



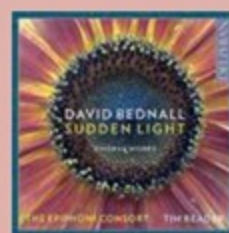
DCD34193

Dreams and Fancies:
English music for solo guitar
Sean Shibe

Even in this new heyday for the instrument, Sean Shibe stands out as a truly uncommon talent. 'I want to hear his interpretation of Britten's *Nocturnal* over and over,' wrote David Nice in an awed recent concert review. 'This, for me, is the definitive performance.' This astounding young performer's full album debut pays homage to the father of all modern guitarists, Julian Bream, featuring pieces he commissioned from Britten, Walton, Lennox Berkeley and Malcolm Arnold. At the centre of the album is nested a clutch of Dowland pieces – treasures from a previous Elizabethan golden age.

'Can there be more luminous tones and cusp-of-silence dynamics to be drawn from a guitar than the ones 23-year-old Sean Shibe constantly searches out?'

— The Arts Desk, September 2015



DCD34189

David Bednall: Sudden Light (Choral Works)
The Epiphoni Consort / Tim Reader

David Bednall's music – in its extended diatonic chords and shimmering polytonal beauty, as well as in the folk-like melodies of many of the works on this album – grows from the ground of native tradition. A disciple of Vaughan Williams, Finzi or Howells? His music also harbours traces of Messiaen, Duruflé and Vierne. The Epiphoni Consort and their director Tim Reader are passionate advocates of the composer, and this enterprising debut recording – opening with the ravishing depiction of luminosity that is his 40-part motet *Lux orta est iusto* – serves to highlight why Bednall is well on his way to becoming one of the UK's best-loved living choral composers.

New in July 2017

Delphian Records Ltd, 34 Wallace Avenue,
Wallyford, East Lothian, EH21 8BZ
www.delphianrecords.co.uk

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter, or
find out more by joining the Delphian mailing list:
www.delphianrecords.co.uk/join





Still LEARNING *Still* EVOLVING

Herbert Blomstedt turns 90 later this year, but his desire to strike a balance between musicality and intellectualism continues to drive him, most recently in Beethoven, finds Philip Clark

The morning after a life-enhancing performance of Beethoven's *Choral* Symphony with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Herbert Blomstedt is warmly greeting some old family friends backstage at the Leipzig Gewandhaus and I fear that I'm intruding. But Blomstedt, a sensitive and serene presence, senses my discomfort and waves me across the room

to introduce me to his pals. 'We're about to have a really good conversation about Beethoven,' he tells them and immediately everyone is put at their ease.

Blomstedt clearly feels right at home in Leipzig, where he served as the Gewandhaus Orchestra's Music Director between 1998 and 2005 – its 19th Gewandhauskapellmeister. It was Riccardo Chailly's abrupt departure from the orchestra in 2016 that brought Blomstedt back into the fold as an unofficial caretaker before Andris Nelsons takes over the helm next year. Blomstedt had originally inherited the orchestra from Kurt Masur at a time when the city of Leipzig was still recovering from the GDR period and the orchestra was far from the finely honed specimen it is today. He had arrived shortly after quitting his post as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, a time that, thanks to a fertile recording contract with Decca, helped clinch his reputation with the record-buying public – discs of Mendelssohn, Bruckner, Nielsen, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Berwald mapped out his repertoire, the necessary fixtures balanced against more personal enthusiasms.

Born in Springfield, Massachusetts, to Swedish parents who moved back to Gothenburg when Blomstedt was two, his approach to conducting reflects his identity as a citizen of everywhere. He studied with Igor Markevitch in Salzburg – and with Leonard Bernstein during the very early days of Tanglewood. He has led Scandinavian orchestras (the Oslo Philharmonic, the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Swedish RSO) and was Chief Conductor of the Staatskapelle Dresden between 1975 and 1985. And having just watched him lead the first in what will be a run of three Beethoven Nines, Blomstedt's looming 90th birthday feels almost implausible.

To celebrate, Accentus Music is releasing a complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies on CD (plus Nos 5, 6, 7 and 9 on DVD/Blu-ray) taken from Blomstedt's performances with

the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra between 2014 and 2017, but I wonder what happens to the *Choral* Symphony in his mind between performances. Is he delivering final and settled thoughts – or does the piece continue to evolve inside his imagination? 'It never leaves the mind and only when I intensely start working on another piece will it fade,' he tells me. 'It's there when I'm trying to sleep – what can I do to make it more beautiful, or to help a musician with the intonation or the phrasing? It's a work in progress all the time.'

Blomstedt's first Beethoven cycle was completed in 1980, during his time in Dresden... 'No, no, I've not listened to those records since I made them,' Blomstedt says, anticipating my question, 'but each performance is an accumulation of all my experiences with the piece.' Since last night's performance he has, he says, been thinking about how Beethoven deals with rhythm in his opening movement – about how his signature 'da, da, da, DAH' motif,

'The Choral Symphony is in my mind when I'm trying to sleep – what can I do to make it more beautiful? It's a work in progress all the time'

which haunts the movement in various rhythmically displaced and intensified permutations, is, as he puts it, 'reversed' by the unusual ritardando introduced later in the movement (bar 214 in the published score). 'I never thought before that there was a connection', he explains, 'and perhaps it was not conscious for Beethoven. But he definitely works with the contrast, making it into a constructive element.'

I suggest that for music so fixated on interruption – think about how the timpani brutally puncture the orchestral fabric during the *Scherzo*, or the way Beethoven drops material from earlier in the symphony into his finale – the piece is also vigorously unified by its motivic foundations. 'Its coherence is astonishing,' Blomstedt marvels. 'The whole piece is built on two motifs: the falling fourths you hear right at the beginning, and then the exact opposite: chromatic slurred notes, falling seconds like a sigh, as in the slow movement.'

The falling fourths that open the *Adagio* are obviously related to the very opening of the symphony, he says, before explaining how the end of the finale runs amok with those falling seconds – and how the very last notes are a sped-up version of the very first notes in the symphony.

Is it a conductor's responsibility, I ask, to point out those intricacies of construction – or can the music lose itself in too much nuts-and-bolts detail? 'This music is very emotional while also being an intellectual game for us musicians,' he responds. 'But that game must never compromise musical sense. For instance, the last notes of the symphony are the same as the first notes; but it would make no sense to accent da-DAH-da-DAH-da to match the opening, especially at that very fast tempo. Always there are pitfalls – but these details cannot be passed over like nothing happened.'

We rewind back to the Gothenburg of Blomstedt's youth, where Beethoven provided his initiation into music. As a violinist he played Beethoven string quartets and piano trios with his cellist brother and pianist mother and found what he describes as the 'willpower' and 'the motor' of the music irresistible, a window into a world beyond Sweden. 'Most Swedes are bound to more sentimental things,' he explains. 'We are Northern people and we love when the sun appears and we can dream about nature and sunsets with sweet harmonies. But this is not at all the German way; they want to be active and to produce things. And this

'Most Swedes are bound to sentimental things. We love when the sun appears and we can dream about nature and sunsets with sweet harmonies. But this is not the German way'

is what Beethoven symbolised to me. When I discovered Carl Nielsen, this same idea of movement and goal in music felt very important.'

Studying abroad changed everything: 'I had been studying in Sweden, and I was lucky enough to get a scholarship for one year in Salzburg to a conducting institute led by Igor Markevitch. I didn't know his name – what had attracted

me was that Karajan was listed as a guest lecturer, but he didn't show up.

'But Markevitch's instruction was just what I needed. I knew how to beat in 2 and 3, but he taught us that what comes out

in sound corresponds with what you do with your hands. Alexander Gibson, Daniel Barenboim and Wolfgang Sawallisch were in the same class, and Markevitch was insistent that the score is the bible of music – you *must* do what it says. But he never allowed us to conduct from the score. In front of the orchestra, you have to guide their impulses, not read the score. How loud is loud? How fast is *Allegro*? You tell it with your hands.'

Bernstein was a powerful complement to Markevitch: 'He was less interested in teaching technique – as a musician he more



Herbert Blomstedt conducts the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra with the score unopened on his music stand: 'You have to guide their impulses, not read the score'



'Movement and goal': Nielsen's music won Blomstedt a Gramophone Award in 1991

or less improvised on the podium. But his musical ideas were fantastic and the way he analysed scores was inspiring. Bernstein put the New York Philharmonic on the map again, but there was a lesson to be learnt in his success. The orchestral playing got worse and worse because the musicians knew success could be achieved through Bernstein's personality. They didn't need to play well.'

And talk of the New York Philharmonic links back nicely to Leipzig. Blomstedt's predecessor, Kurt Masur, became Music Director of the NYPO in 1991 while he was still at Leipzig. And with Masur's passing, I wonder how the Leipzig orchestra *circa* 2017 compares to the orchestra that Blomstedt encountered when he first arrived two decades ago. He tells it as it is. 'When I arrived [in 1998] it was not in good shape. During the GDR period, the orchestra was one of the main providers of hard currency for the GDR – they played for big fees in Japan, West Germany and America, which all went to the state. To play all these concerts and the opera at home the orchestra was suddenly enlarged by 50 musicians, and they were not the best quality.'

'Masur was here for 25 years and after that long period of time tensions had inevitably grown between him and the orchestra. Although he was never a party member, he was friends with Erich Honecker and through that friendship this concert hall was built. When Masur encouraged restraint in 1989, he became a hero – which led to his post in New York. I am not at all a political person and could not fulfil that same role, but slowly we worked to improve the orchestra – and it has never been better than today.' **G**

Blomstedt's DVD/Blu-ray recording of Beethoven's Symphony No 9 on Accentus was reviewed in the March issue. The DVD/Blu-ray recordings of Nos 5, 6 and 7 will be reviewed in the August issue

PHOTOGRAPHY: GERT MOETHES/ACCENTUS MUSIC

LARS VOGT

ON ONDINE

BEETHOVEN

Piano Concertos Nos. 1 & 5

LARS VOGT

Royal Northern Sinfonia

NEW RELEASE

Beginning of the Beethoven Concertos cycle with the Royal Northern Sinfonia

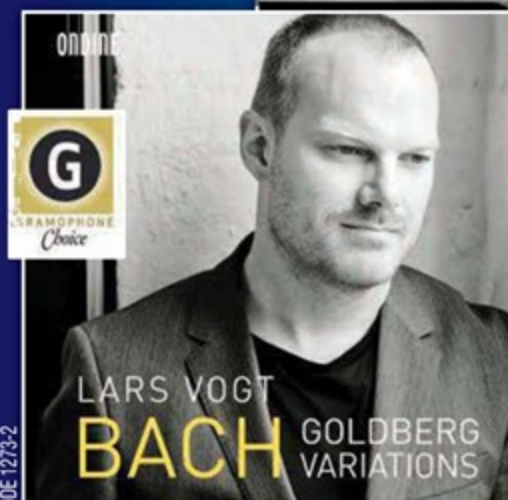
"Vogt's playing brings out the extreme dynamic contrasts, the frequent accents, and the astonishing inventiveness of Schubert's harmonies. A feast."

Sunday Times
November 2016

ONDINE

LARS VOGT
SCHUBERT

IMPROMPTUS, D 999
MOMENTS MUSICAUX, D 780
SIX GERMAN DANCES, D 820



00E 1273-2

LARS VOGT

BACH

GOLDBERG VARIATIONS

"... a distinguished addition to the discography of the *Goldberg Variations* in all their glorious elegance."
Gramophone Awards issue 2015

★★★★
The Observer
August 2015

Distributed exclusively in the UK by Select Music and in North America by Naxos of America.

ONDINE
www.ondine.net



Dreaming

OF NEW VOCAL CHALLENGES

She made her name in Baroque repertoire but soprano Véronique Gens doesn't shy away from trying new things – as her 19th-century operas recording goes to show, finds **Richard Lawrence**

Those who have seen the DVD of Kasper Holten's Covent Garden production of *Don Giovanni* (Opus Arte, 12/14) will be familiar with the soundbites that precede the action. The singer taking the part of Donna Elvira comes across with an alarming fierceness: 'Don Giovanni is a horrible man. He betrays everyone. Probably there are many Don Giovannis in the street. Please don't meet them; don't even talk to them.' It was a relief to find that in real life, Véronique Gens, whom I met in an Art Nouveau restaurant in her home town of Nantes, was not fierce at all but reassuringly willing to submit (in fluent English) to my questions.

And for 10 years it was Mozart roles – not just Elvira, but the Countess, Fiordiligi, Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito* – to which she mainly devoted her time. But that was not how she started out. 'It was the year that William Christie was preparing Lully's *Atys*. I was very young, in his class at the Paris Conservatoire: I was in the chorus of Les Arts Florissants and I had a very small solo part, then a bigger part when it was revived. We did the show all over the world and everybody was there: Marc Minkowski in the orchestra, Hervé Niquet in the choir, Christophe Rousset playing the harpsichord. It was a great adventure, and I got very excited about the Baroque.' Her parents insisted that she should also study at the Sorbonne. 'I was furious, but now I have a 17-year-old daughter I think exactly like them: before you do whatever you like you have to have a diploma.' Later she toured with Les Arts Florissants in an ensemble of five or six singers and organ. 'I was very lucky to be there at the right time,' she says.

How did her career develop? 'After a while I felt my voice needed more space. With all the ornaments in French Baroque music you have to tighten your voice. If you sing full voice it doesn't work at all. So when I met Jean-Claude Malgoire and he offered me Cherubino I said, "Let's try it". I'd never had such a big role, and it was the worst experience of my life! The other singers were so experienced and the director was horrible to me because I was so tall. But Malgoire encouraged me and later it was all right.'



Fierce: Gens as Elvira with Mariusz Kwiecień as the Don

'I never had the feeling of betraying the Baroque with Mozart. You still have to be clear, in tune, not much vibrato'

Gens continued to sing Baroque music in various ensembles 'everywhere', including a Lully cycle at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. Then came her 10-year stint concentrating on Mozart, which she saw as a natural development via the operas of Gluck. 'I never had the feeling of betraying the Baroque by singing Mozart. You still have to be precise, very clear, in tune, not too much vibrato.' Gens has sung the Countess and Donna Elvira many times in Vienna or Munich, often with little preparation. She made me laugh with her story of a *Don Giovanni* performance which she hadn't rehearsed on stage. She couldn't find the Zerlina, who was dressed the

same as the chorus, and she hadn't been warned that among the equestrian statues was the Commendatore on a living, breathing horse: it suddenly moved, which made her scream for real.

'But that's how you learn your job, it makes you strong, you're ready for anything.' She is mordant about some revival directors. 'They say they wanted a small blonde and you're a tall brunette – what are they going to do with you? That has happened many times. Or they tell you to watch the video and do the same.'

Gens's next staged Mozart after our interview was to be Vitellia in Dresden. I ask about the wide range of the vocal line. 'I hate the terzetto ['Vengo... aspettate...']! The top D is only an ornament but I'd change it if I could. But Vitellia is a bitch and I like it! The tessitura is crazy but the rest lies in the centre of the voice. Low notes have never been a problem. But people don't come for the top D, or the low G [in 'Non più di fiori']; they come for the way she behaves to poor Sesto. She's horrible, and it's fun to play that kind of role.'

Véronique Gens's repertoire is not confined to opera. Last year she won a *Gramophone* Award for 'Néère' (1/16), a recital of *mélodies*. 'I was so proud of that award. The project was my idea and I'd fought for 15 years to get it accepted. I was told that French song didn't sell, that I should sing Schubert or Wolf, and I was so grateful when Alpha took it on.' Gens chose the songs and it was also her idea to spread the selection of Hahn's *Études Latines* among the *mélodies* by Duparc and Chausson.

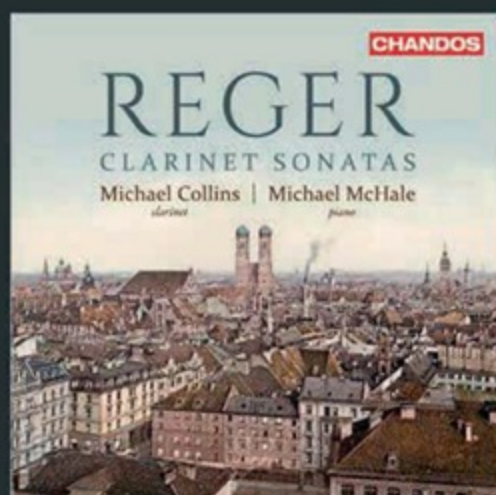


Disc of the Month Flux: Original Works for Saxophone Quartet

Ferio Saxophone Quartet

Appointed St John's Smith Square Young Artist for 2016 – 17 and having already won many prizes and awards, the Ferio Saxophone Quartet is Europe's most exciting up-and-coming ensemble of its kind. For its debut commercial CD, the Quartet is inviting listeners to experience a number of musical styles and moods, playing works from the time of the saxophone's invention right up to the present day. Composers of these original works for saxophone quartet range from Gabriel Pierné and Jean-Baptiste Singelée to Eugène Bozza and Guillermo Lago (who wrote *The Wordsworth Poems* for the Quartet this year).

CHAN 10987



Reger Clarinet Sonatas

Michael Collins | Michael McHale

Michael Collins and Michael McHale here present a new volume exploring the lyrical clarinet repertoire. Their journey through works that encapsulate the variety of nuance and colour of which the instrument is capable, inevitably led them to another great composer for the medium: Max Reger. An enthralling collection, full of poetry and tenderness.

CHAN 10970



Explosive Classics

Compilation of famously spectacular works by Grieg, Mussorgsky, Stravinsky, Verdi, Wagner... This compilation at Classic Chandos price gathers exhilarating performances of some of the most orchestrally brilliant pieces ever written. The landmark recordings reveal the powerful, characteristic Chandos sound at its best. So turn up the volume of your Hi-Fi, move away any glass or crystal, make sure your neighbours are either out, deaf, or very good friends... and enjoy!

CHAN 10989 X



Tchaikovsky The Complete Ballets

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra
Neeme Järvi

To celebrate the eightieth birthday of Neeme Järvi, we have gathered his recent recordings of Tchaikovsky's three full-length ballets (complete versions) in a box set at special price. Recorded in surround-sound with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, these are landmark performances, both for the music itself and for the critically acclaimed interpretations.

CHSA 5204(5)



Holst The Planets Strauss Also sprach Zarathustra

National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain | Edward Gardner

This is the eagerly awaited LP release of a highly successful SACD, 'Album of the Week' on Classic FM, praised by *BBC Music* for its 'zest and freshness' and by *Gramophone* for its 'combustible power, enormous physical impact and technical accomplishment'.

CHAN 10928



Emotional: recording 'Visions', a continuation of her 'Tragédiennes' recitals, with the Munich Radio Orchestra under Hervé Niquet

'I love these songs and it was such a big pleasure to record them: just the producer, the pianist Susan Manoff and me, working 10 hours a day. It wasn't tiring, the music isn't too high or too low, and it felt as though we were telling a story.' For her recitals – in Germany, Holland, Belgium – she insists on singing French songs and having the words printed in the programmes.

Now what about her new recording, 'Visions'? 'This is so exciting! All these women in 19th-century opera and oratorio: dreaming, hoping, praying, crying.' It's a continuation of her three 'Tragédiennes' recitals for Virgin Classics, comprising almost entirely unfamiliar pieces. 'Probably the only one that's a little bit known is the 'Extase' from Massenet's *La Vierge*, which has been recorded by Françoise Pollet and Régine Crespin.' (And those who have travelled on the Paris Métro will be amused to see included an air from *Étienne Marcel*, better known as a stop on Line 4.) Gens was given an enormous amount of material from which she made her own selection, a task that took nearly two years. 'It's terrible having to choose: there's so much, at least enough for "Visions 2"!' How did the Munich Radio Orchestra respond to the music? 'Hervé Niquet was explaining the situations to them and they said, "Stop, we want to play!" But when he asked them to imagine the beating of wings in the Archangel's air from Franck's *Rédemption*, suddenly the playing was much better. Everyone was very surprised by the results; the introduction to Bruneau's *Geneviève* was really impressive.'

The disc is a co-production with the Palazzetto Bru Zane, Centre de musique romantique française – the foundation which sponsors (among other things) the CD-and-book recordings of complete operas. Gens has so far been involved in six of these, including Godard's *Dante* and Halévy's *La Reine de Chypre* (both still to come), and she is full of praise for the enterprise. 'They are

doing a great job and they are so enthusiastic. It's very far from Mozart and it's very exciting.' In fact, Gens's enthusiasm and excitement are bubbling away all the time. The next week she was off to Munich to sing Alice in *Falstaff*; in the autumn she is appearing in *The Merry Widow* at the Opéra Bastille. 'It's not my usual repertoire, but sometimes you need to sing something new. I did it in French a few years ago in Lyons but now I'm singing in German. It's difficult – so much speech! – but I like challenges.' And what

about her experience of singing the role of Madame Lidoine

in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, which I was fortunate

enough to see at the Champs-Élysées with a wonderful cast

including Patricia Petibon, Sophie Koch and Sabine Devieille

covering for a *souffrante* Sandrine Piau (Erato, 3/15)? 'It was an

incredible team, such great music, a true story, and we were

crying every night!'

I wondered if Gens had any heroes. 'Kiri Te Kanawa has

been a model, I've always felt very close to her. Her voice is

so personal: you put on the radio and the singers could

be anyone, but you recognise her – and Renée Fleming

– immediately. And when I sing *Les nuits d'été* I have

Régine Crespin in my head.

*'I'm not bored but I need to do new things...
I'm not scared if my voice changes – I'd
love to sing lower stuff: Sesto, maybe!'*

I like Susan Graham, too.' Graham is tall, like Gens, and was a believable Chérubin in Massenet's opera at Covent Garden some years ago; but in fact Gens hasn't sung many trouser roles.

And the future? 'I've been very lucky. I wanted to sing all those Mozart characters, and I did.' But, as so often in our conversation, she reverts to her desire to be challenged. 'I'm not bored, you can't be bored with Mozart, but I need to do new things.' She already has Desdemona and Alice in her repertoire; might she take on Verdi in French? To my surprise – because she sings an impressive 'Toi qui sus le néant des grandeurs' on 'Tragédiennes 3' – she is not sure about

Elisabeth in *Don Carlos*. 'It's really high. I'm something in between a soprano and a mezzo. I know what I am and there's a repertoire that suits me.' Might she become a mezzo in later life, as others have? 'Why not? I'm not scared if my voice changes. I would sing lower stuff: Sesto, maybe! There are many things I could do.' And with that, Véronique Gens downs her Earl Grey and we leave the operatic fantasy of the extravagantly tiled brasserie for the world outside. ©



Proud recital winner: Gens with Susan Manoff at the Gramophone Awards in 2016

► 'Visions' is reviewed on page 90





Amplify your life

primephonic.com
for life on an epic scale

classical downloads & streaming

GRAMOPHONE

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

David Vickers admires a reconstruction of Venetian Vespers using music from Monteverdi's *Selve morale e spirituale*, superbly performed by I Fagiolini and Robert Hollingworth



'The Other Vespers'

Castello Sonata in D minor Donati Dulcis amor Iesu! Frescobaldi Toccata terza G Gabrieli Magnificat a 14 Monteverdi Beatus vir I. Confitebor tibi, Domine II. Dixit Dominus II. Laudate Dominum I. Laudate pueri I. Salve, o regina. Ut queant laxis Palestrina/Bovicelli Ave verum corpus Usper Sonata a 8 Viadana Deus in adiutorium I Fagiolini; The 24; The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble / Robert Hollingworth
Decca © 483 1654DH (80' • DDD • T/t)

There is only one eyewitness report of Monteverdi directing Vespers music after his permanent relocation to Venice: the Dutch tourist Constantijn Huygens attended a Vespers for the Feast of St John the Baptist on June 24, 1620 (probably at SS Giovanni e Paolo), and 'heard the most perfect music I think I shall ever hear in my life'. This enigmatic occasion has prompted several speculative reconstructions of an alternative Monteverdi Vespers making use of music selected from his large Venetian anthology *Selve morale e spirituale*, published in 1641 but its content presumably written across many years; the collection is rich in multiple settings of psalms necessary for important male saints' feasts (and much else), so Robert Hollingworth's mischievously titled 'The Other Vespers' represents just one of a range of possible alternatives.

Recorded during chilly November conditions at St George's Church, Chesterton, there is plenty of warmth and animation in the superb music-making. I Fagiolini's consort and solo singing are exemplary, and on a few occasions fuller choral



'In such sure hands (and throats) as these, Monteverdi's psalm-settings reach their fullest capacity to enchant and astonish'

moments are bolstered by eight talented students from The 24 (Hollingworth's recently founded chamber choir at the University of York). Five psalms and a

hymn from *Selve morale* are placed within a plausible liturgical context between plainchant antiphons (sung with unaffected simplicity) and plenty of music by Monteverdi's contemporaries.

Viadana's response *Domine ad adiuvandum* (1612) is adorned with liberal embellishments from cornettist Andrea Inghisciano; Gawain Glenton's seductive cornett floats sensitively above a fascinating sacred contrafactum of a Palestrina madrigal, its polyphony reworked by Giovanni Battista Bovicelli into a stylishly devised example of how to ornament (*Ave verum corpus*). Castello's Sonata in D minor (1629) is played with conversational charm by violinist Bjarte Eike, and organist Catherine Pierron demonstrates a nimble touch in a Frescobaldi Toccata (1637). The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble displays its expertise in a solemn eight-part Sonata by Monteverdi's Venetian colleague Francesco Usper (1619). The largest-scale music is a 14-part *Magnificat* by Giovanni Gabrieli (1615), which captures the perfect incongruity of polished gutsiness, whereas five solo voices sing with eloquent intimacy in Ignazio Donati's motet *Dulcis amor Iesu!* (1616). Throughout proceedings the continuo realisations of theorbists Lynda Sayce and Eligio Quintiero are impeccable.

In such sure hands (and throats) as these, Monteverdi's psalm-settings reach their fullest capacity to enchant and astonish. *Dixit Dominus* (primo) achieves a thrilling synergy of articulate instrumental playing, fulsome choral ripienos and dexterous solo singing. Sonorous textures doubled



Robert Hollingworth - 'curiosity to ask difficult questions'



I Fagiolini and Robert Hollingworth bring fresh ideas, exemplary singing and superb music-making to Monteverdi

by trombones and harmonic twists from the violins are balanced perfectly in the descending chromaticism that word-paints 'misericordia' in *Laudate Dominum* (primo). Hollingworth argues in his booklet note (and more extensively online at a microsite dedicated to the project) that Monteverdi's triple-time signatures are commonly performed too quickly – in a nutshell, he reckons that a late-Baroque dance aesthetic has been misapplied to Monteverdi's late-Renaissance practice. These scholarly ideas directly inform the shape and personality of these gorgeous reinterpretations. Seen afresh in this light, *Confitebor tibi, Domine* (secondo) lilts gently and with delightful translucence, its measured pace aligned to an affectionate tone of delivery from the superb solo trio Ciara Hendrick, Nicholas Mulroy and Jonathan Sells. Similarly, the evergreen *Beatus vir* (primo) springs a double surprise: the opening section (four beats in a bar, over a ground bass) is a notch quicker than is usually the case (its light flexibility of touch and articulate delivery of text means that the details are never in jeopardy of being blurred in a rush), but the ensuing dancelike, triple-

time middle section adopts a slower and softer pulse than usual. This means that the violin ritornello has increased lyricism, the florid solo voice parts are more congruent (the duo singing of mezzo-sopranos Clare Wilkinson and Ciara Hendrick is lovely), and the singers are able to communicate the text with more effective clarity than is often the case at a quicker speed. What's more, the word-setting actually makes more sense when performed like this. Monteverdi's small-scale setting of *Salve, o regina* (1624), sung mellifluously by Matthew Long, is a beautifully understated conclusion.

In truth, the choice of Monteverdi psalm-settings has a fair bit of overlap with Gustav Leonhardt's 'Vespri di S Giovanni Battista' (Philips, 4/89) and also Rinaldo Alessandrini's award-winning 'Vespri solenni per la Festa di San Marco' (Naïve, A/14), but Hollingworth's curiosity to ask difficult questions and put practical suggestions to the test within a contextual performance brings more to mind the philological instincts and musical qualities of Andrew Parrott (to whom this recording is dedicated as 'a respectful homage').

I Fagiolini were never going to offer anything mundane for the composer's 450th birthday celebrations, and this 'other Vespers' contributes fresh ideas about how to interpret music about which plenty of matters are far from settled, in addition to being a fine advocacy of Monteverdi's later Venetian-period sacred works. **David Vickers**

KEY TO SYMBOLS

£	£10 and over	⇓	Download only
Ⓜ	£7.76 to £9.99	Ⓡ	Reissue
ⓑ	£6.25 to £7.75	ⓗ	Historic
Ⓢ	£6.24 and below (price per disc)	T	Text(s) included
②	Compact disc (number of discs in set)	t	translation(s) included
Ⓢ	SACD (Super Audio CD)	S	Synopsis included
Ⓛ	DVD Video	s	subtitles included
Ⓛ	Blu-ray	nla	no longer available
Ⓛ	LP	aas	all available separately
		oas	only available separately



Editor's Choice

Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings reviewed in this issue

Orchestral



Mark Pullinger on Philippe Jordan's Mussorgsky and Prokofiev:

'The Classical Symphony is played with panache, the glossy Parisian veneer perfect for Prokofiev's Haydnesque wit' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 37**



Richard Bratby listens to Strauss on winds and strings:

'A full-fat horn section gives a wonderfully Bavarian, Baron Ochs sort of feel to the early Serenade' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 40**

Adams • Korngold

Adams Violin Concerto^a

Korngold Violin Concerto, Op 35^b

Ilya Gringolts *vn*

Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra /

^aSanntu-Matias Rouvali, ^bJulien Salemkour

Orchid © ORC100066 (57' • DDD)



Ilya Gringolts plays with a ferocity that – in tandem with taut rhythmic control – adroitly avoids even the slightest hint of frenzy. And yet, for all its intensity and firmness of grip, there's an equally riveting sense of spontaneity to his playing, too – particularly in Adams's Concerto, with its intricately variegated, continuous solo part.

Gringolts phrases assertively and with such expressive agility that at times in the first movement it sounds as if the violin and orchestra are working independently yet in sync, like separate gears in a great machine. He imbues the slow, central Chaconne with an air of acute melancholy that's deeply affecting, while creating an ever-shifting kaleidoscope of tone colour. Listen, for instance, at 4'15", where his sound suddenly becomes gritty and choked with emotion, then a few seconds later suggests a sweeter ache as the melody takes wing. Gringolts digs into the finale, too, and the resulting tonal bite adds a feeling of urgency to the propulsive excitement.

The Korngold Concerto is similarly convincing. Gringolts is rapturous where appropriate but finds an unusual element of playfulness that highlights the music's quicksilver, Mendelssohnian qualities. He gives a healthy rhythmic snap to even the most luxuriant passages, as if to remind us that this is music with backbone as well as sentiment. I was particularly moved by the feeling of Mahlerian yearning at 6'30" in the opening *Moderato nobile*, and the unusually earnest insistence of the slow movement.

Conductor Julien Salemkour and the Copenhagen Phil support Gringolts with

playing that's correspondingly heartfelt yet clear-eyed in the Korngold, and the orchestra are even more persuasive, perhaps, under Santtu-Matias Rouvali in the tricky rhythms of the Adams. Strongly recommended. **Andrew Farach-Colton**

Brahms

Violin Concerto, Op 77^a. Violin Sonata No 1,

Op 78^b. 'F-A-E' Scherzo, WoO2^b

Vadim Gluzman *vn* ^b**Angela Yoffe** *pf*

^aLucerne Symphony Orchestra / **James Gaffigan**

BIS © BIS2172 (73' • DDD/DSD)



A student of, among others, the famous violin pedagogue Zakhar Bron, Vadim

Gluzman carries forwards a Russian-Jewish playing tradition that hails back to Jascha Heifetz, David Oistrakh and Leonid Kogan, with Maxim Vengerov and Vadim Repin representing the younger generation. I make the point because all these players display a roster of traits that marks them out as part of an age-old violinistic community: a seductively sweet tone, a biting attack of the bow, agility, brilliance, a flexible approach to phrasing and a perfect balance of head and heart. Of course, there are countless players who hail from other traditions who also lay claim to these and similar virtues, but spend just a few minutes in the company of Gluzman's Brahms Concerto and, to call on an obvious cliché, you 'know where he's coming from'.

Listen from 9'57" in the first movement and you'll hear Gluzman's mellow tone, sensitively judged chords, unforced passagework, neat trills and (at 11'28") athletic leaps that hit their target each time. He is also the master of Joachim's cadenza, a most beautiful performance; his *Adagio* truly sings (James Gaffigan directs a helpfully flowing accompaniment), while the closing *Allegro giocoso* dances to a light, winning lilt. Here most of all the collaboration with Gaffigan and his

on-the-ball Lucerne players works well, though their contribution to the first movement might have benefited from a little more grit and muscle.

Climbing down from the majesty of the Concerto to the intimacy of the G major Sonata, Gluzman is very ably supported by pianist Angela Yoffe, who sees to it that Brahms's contrapuntally hyperactive piano-writing tells with crystal clarity. Again, a malleable approach to phrasing keeps arguments fresh and meaningful while Gluzman's tone is if anything even sweeter and more expressively yielding than in the concerto. The finale's wistful opening is especially affecting and the programme's closing 'F-A-E' Scherzo relates alternating unrest and passion as vividly as, say, Perlman with Argerich or Ferras with Barbizet.

An excellent disc, then, with high-rating performances and good sound. In the digital/SACD field I can't think of a Brahms Violin Concerto that I prefer, though Repin with Chailly (DG in standard stereo, generously coupled with the Double Concerto) is easily as good. **Rob Cowan**

Violin Concerto – selected comparison:

Repin, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orch, Chailly

(3/09) (DG) 477 7470GH

Bruckner • Wagner

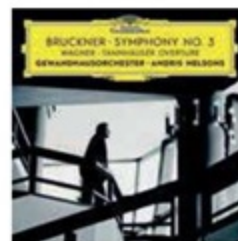
Bruckner Symphony No 3 (1889 version,

ed Nowak) Wagner Tannhäuser – Overture

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra / Andris Nelsons

DG © 479 8208GH (76' • DDD)

Recorded live, June 2016



This first instalment of a new Bruckner series by Andris Nelsons and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra for DG couples the Third Symphony with Wagner's *Tannhäuser* Overture. In an interview in the booklet, Nelsons discusses the influence of Wagner on Bruckner's music, although in fact the shorter 1889 version of the symphony recorded here omits the



'Direct, clear-sighted and spacious': Andris Nelsons begins his Bruckner cycle on DG with the Wagner-inspired Third Symphony

quotations from *Tannhäuser*, *Lobengrin* and *Tristan* found in earlier versions of the score, leaving only the reference to the 'magic sleep' motif from *Die Walküre* intact near the end of the *Adagio*.

As a Bruckner interpreter, Nelsons is direct, clear-sighted and spacious, the performance guided with a sure hand and a sense of inevitability but also meticulous in observing tempo and dynamic markings. The attention to dynamic levels is especially impressive, Bruckner's frequent juxtapositions of loud and soft presented with unfailing accuracy and musicality without giving the impression of being self-conscious or mannered. Phrasing and balance also sound effortlessly natural, not surprising from an orchestra whose extensive Bruckner tradition includes recorded cycles under Masur and Blomstedt. The easy charm of the Gewandhaus playing in the Trio of the Scherzo is a particular delight. The reading as a whole provides a complementary experience to the lean and intense recording of the 1889 edition recorded by Karajan.

Many of the qualities heard in the Bruckner also inform Nelsons's performance of the *Tannhäuser* Overture,

heard here in its shorter form without the Venusberg music. The warmth and sonority of the playing at the start is enthralling and the performance unfolds with character and excitement. DG's sound for both works has a pleasing combination of weight and clarity despite the complications of live recording, and audience noise has been edited out.

Christian Hoskins

Bruckner – selected comparison:

BPO, Karajan (3/91*) (DG) 477 7580GB9

Bruckner

Symphony No 6 (ed Cohrs)

Upper Austrian Youth Symphony Orchestra /

Rémy Ballot

Gramola (P) 99127 (69' • DDD/DSD)

Recorded live at the Stiftsbasilika St Florian, Austria, August 19, 2016



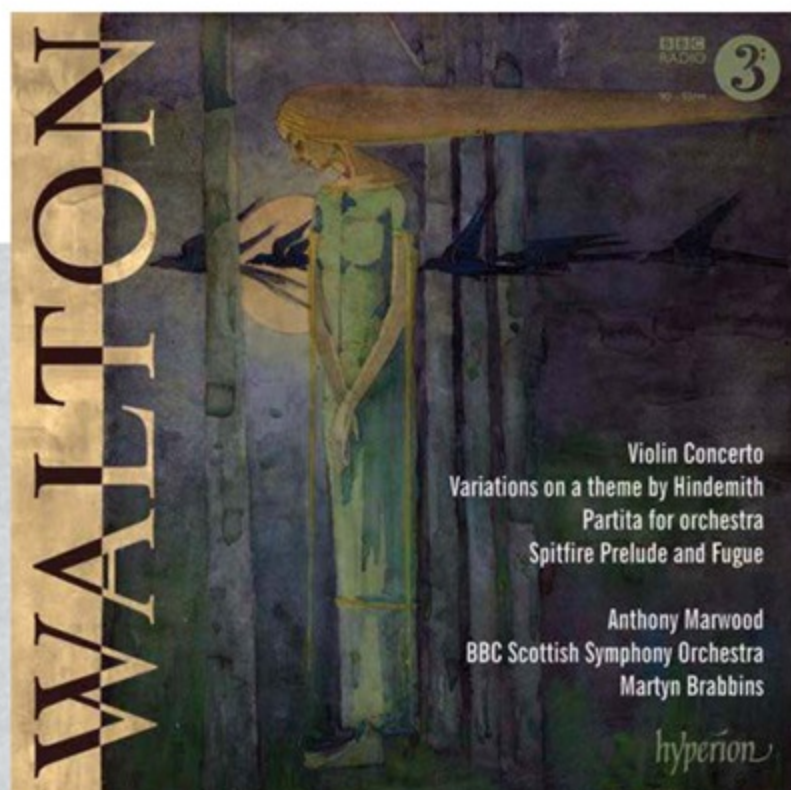
Rémy Ballot's Bruckner recordings for Gramola (Symphonies Nos 3, 8 and 9) have thus far been notable for emulating the extremely broad tempos favoured by Celibidache in his later years.

Interestingly, Celibidache chose a more mainstream approach for his interpretation of the Sixth Symphony and, by coincidence or design, so does Ballot in this performance from the 2016 Brucknertage. Although this is still a very spacious interpretation, the pacing of the symphony's faster music is appropriate to the reverberant acoustic of St Florian and slower sections are nurtured with sensitivity and warmth. Few passages sound slow in the context of the performance as a whole, and the result has an inner logic and consistency that's very compelling.

It's perhaps not surprising that the *Adagio* responds well to Ballot's slow tempo but it's the finale that's the highlight of this recording. Ballot eclipses not only Celibidache but also most other conductors in this sometimes problematic movement, adroitly navigating Bruckner's playful subversion of sonata form while conveying the music's boisterousness and lyricism with considerable feeling. The passage at fig N in the development (8'12") is wonderfully moving here and the symphony joyously concludes with a satisfying combination of weight and power.

The players of the Upper Austrian Youth Symphony Orchestra, averaging 18 years

hyperion



Martyn Brabbins and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra are joined by Anthony Marwood for a radiant account of Walton's violin concerto. The remainder of this all-Walton album is every bit as thrilling.

CDA67986
Available Friday 30 June 2017

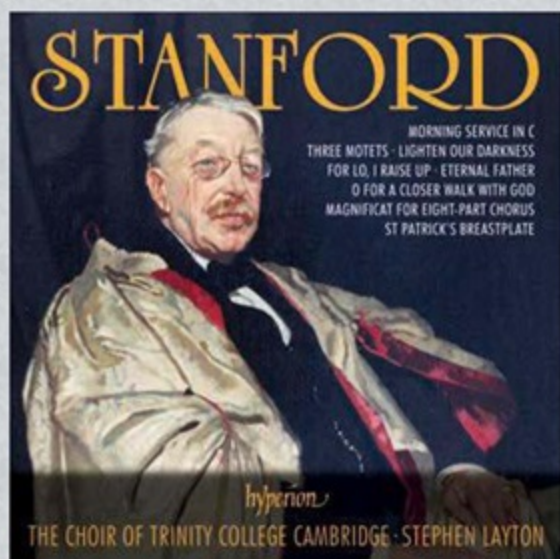
Walton: Violin Concerto, Partita & Hindemith Variations

ANTHONY MARWOOD violin
BBC SCOTTISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MARTYN BRABBINS conductor

A selection of Stanford's finest church music in a wide-ranging programme from Trinity College Choir.

CDA68174
Available Friday 30 June 2017

Stanford: Choral Music
TRINITY COLLEGE CHOIR
CAMBRIDGE
STEPHEN LAYTON conductor

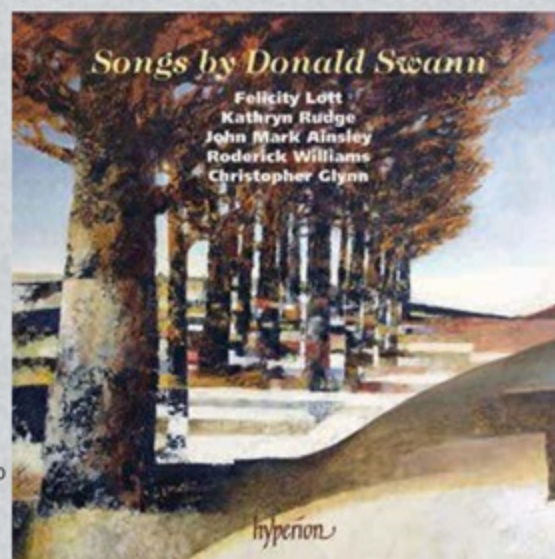


Luxury casting for an economically priced collection celebrating the unique talents of a gifted songwriter.

CDA68172 (2 for the price of 1)
Available Friday 30 June 2017

Swann: Songs

DAME FELICITY LOTT soprano
KATHRYN RUDGE mezzo-soprano
JOHN MARK AINSLEY tenor
RODERICK WILLIAMS baritone
CHRISTOPHER GLYNN piano



COMING SOON...

Sheppard: Media vita & other sacred music Westminster Cathedral Choir, Martin Baker (conductor)
Feldman: For Bunita Marcus Marc-André Hamelin (piano)
Potter: Piano Concertos Nos 2 & 4 Howard Shelley (piano), Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra
Strauss: The Complete Songs, Vol. 8 Nicky Spence (tenor), Rebecca Evans (soprano), Roger Vignoles (piano)
Haydn & Bach: Cello Concertos Steven Isserlis (cello), The Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen
Mozart: Violin Sonatas K303, 377, 378 & 403 Alina Ibragimova (violin), Cédric Tiberghien (piano)
Schubert: Winterreise Florian Boesch (baritone), Roger Vignoles (piano)



The Orlando Consort continue their critically acclaimed odyssey through the works of Guillaume de Machaut.

CDA68134
Available Friday 30 June 2017

Machaut: Sovereign Beauty
THE ORLANDO CONSORT



OTHER LABELS AVAILABLE FOR
DOWNLOAD ON OUR WEBSITE



CDs, MP3 and lossless downloads of all our recordings are
available from www.hyperion-records.co.uk

HYPERION RECORDS LTD, PO BOX 25, LONDON SE9 1AX · info@hyperion-records.co.uk · TEL +44 (0)20 8318 1234



Recording Desyatnikov – left to right: Roman Mints, Yana Ivanilova, Leonid Desyatnikov, Philipp Chizhevsky, Maria Soboleva (producer) and Vilius Keras (engineer)

old, deliver playing that's deeply felt, albeit missing some of the precision a more experienced orchestra would bring, and the recording is impressively transparent given the venue's extended reverberation time. The production preserves the concluding applause as well as some faint audience noise along the way. **Christian Hoskins**

Selected comparison:

Munich PO, *Celibidache* (1/99) (EMI) 556688-2

Crosse

Elegy, Op 1^a. Concerto for Chamber Orchestra, Op 8^b. Concertino, Op 15^c. Violin Concerto No 2, Op 26^d

^dManoug Parikian *vn* ^cMelos Ensemble;

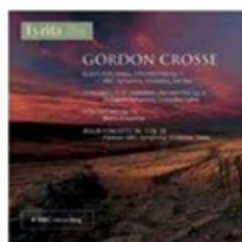
^{ad}BBC Symphony Orchestra / ^dColin Davis,

^aNorman Del Mar; ^bBudapest Symphony Orchestra / György Lehel

Lyrta Itter Broadcast Collection mono

© REAM1133 (68' • ADD)

BBC Broadcast performances, ^aSeptember 9, ^cOctober 26, 1965; ^bJuly 3, 1968; ^dSeptember 7, 1970



Lyrta's mining of the Richard Itter archive continues with a further disc of Gordon

Crosse, whose belated return to composing continues as he nears 80. Fifty years ago Crosse was at the forefront of his generation and this judicious overview of his 1960s output affirms why.

While the serial thinking behind *Elegy* (1960) sounds just a little inhibited, the control Crosse exerts over the emotional ebb and flow of his material is impressive. This is no less evident in the Concerto for chamber orchestra (1962), an astringent yet never arid take on the concerto grosso model that packs a great deal of incident into its tensile outer movements and has real lyrical intensity in its central *Lento*. Nor is there anything lightweight about the divertimento format of the Concertino (1965), its alternation of pensive 'Chorales' and incisive 'Sonatinas' incorporating a 'Variations' movement that makes explicit this piece's underlying character.

Much the most substantial work here is the Second Violin Concerto (1969), where Crosse's motivic skill combines with the dramatic sense evident in the choral and theatrical pieces that preceded it. The initial *Poco lento* unfolds as a thrice-repeated sequence of refrains and verses that develop the salient ideas as purposefully as they uncover their expressive potency and which the ensuing

Allegro brings to a culmination over three fantasias, the granitic climax falling away into an epilogue the more conclusive for its avoiding any obvious resolution.

This impressive work benefits from the advocacy Manoug Parikian manifestly instils into it, with Colin Davis securing a dedicated response from the BBC SO. Transfers and annotations (by Paul Conway) are well up to previous standards in this series. Cordially recommended.

Richard Whitehouse

Desyatnikov

Sketches to Sunset^a. Russian Seasons^b

^bYana Ivanilova *voc* Roman Mints *vn*

^aAlexey Goribol *pf* ^aBrno Philharmonic

Orchestra; ^bLithuanian Chamber Orchestra / Philipp Chizhevsky

Quartz © QTZ2122 (59' • DDD • T/I)



Leonid Desyatnikov is best known as a film composer and for his flamboyant and colourful arrangement of Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*. Both elements are heard on this recording. *Sketches to Sunset*, for solo violin, piano and orchestra, is based



'Brightness and delicacy reign': Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante excel in violin concertos by Jean-Marie Leclair – see review on page 36

on Desyatnikov's soundtrack to the 1992 film *Sunset*, directed by Alexander Zeldovich. It partly explains the suite's bite-size format, which consists of nine short pieces named after characters or scenes from the film. Desyatnikov skilfully rescues these musical cues from the cutting-room floor, reassembling them in such a way that each piece gradually reveals itself as part of a much larger musical jigsaw puzzle.

These puzzles are sometimes of a referential nature, such as the plaintive violin melody heard in 'Absalom's Song', with its fleeting homage to Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*. At other times the references are transformed into grotesque parodies, as heard in the mock tango 'Death in Venice', which quotes from the *Adagietto* of Mahler's Fifth Symphony. Later in the suite, a tango in E minor looks ahead to Desyatnikov's Piazzolla arrangement. Extreme collisions are heard throughout, from strait-laced pastiche ('Lot's Daughters') to circus-music kitsch ('Take Five and Seven').

In contrast, *Russian Seasons* for violin, voice and strings takes its folk inspiration from Stravinsky, with each one of its 12 'songs' drawing on Russian folk tunes. There's altogether more bite and astringency to this performance than

Gidon Kremer's with soprano Julia Korpacheva and Kremerata Baltica. Violinist Roman Mints, excellent throughout, applies more elbow grease to the hurdy-gurdy-style imitations in 'Easter Greeting Song', while Yana Ivanilova's direct, no-frills vocal is less operatically staged than Korpacheva's.

A long line of Russian composers have juxtaposed high with low, poignancy with parody over the years, of course, from Shostakovich to Alexander Raskatov; but Desyatnikov's evocative synthesis surely makes him one of its most gifted proponents. **Pwyll ap Sion**

Russian Seasons – comparative version:

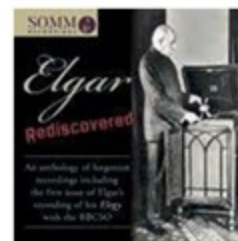
Korpacheva, Kremerata Baltica, Kremer
(NONE) 7559 79803-2

Elgar

'Elgar Rediscovered: An Anthology of Forgotten Recordings'

Elgar *La capricieuse*, Op 17^a. Coronation March, Op 65^b. Coronation Ode, Op 44 – Crown the King^c. The Dream of Gerontius, Op 38 – Kyrie^d. Elegy, Op 58^e. The Fringes of the Fleet^f. The Pipes of Pan^g. Salut d'amour, Op 12^h. Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands, Op 27ⁱ. Sea Pictures, Op 37 – Where corals lie^j. Serenade^k. Sonatina^l. Violin Concerto, Op 61^m. **German** Coronation March and Hymnⁿ

^lMaartje Offers *contr* ^gFrederic Austin *bar* ^fFred Taylor *sng* ^aAlfredo Campoli, ^{hm}Albert Sammons *vns* ^dMrs Baker, ⁱMay Grafton, ^hGerald Moore, ^aHarold Pedlar *pf* ^dStanley Roper *org* ^dSheffield and ⁱLeeds United Choirs / Henry Coward; ^cThe Imperial Bandsmen; ^kAlfredo Campoli and his Salon Orchestra; ^eBBC Symphony Orchestra / Edward Elgar; ^bLondon Philharmonic Orchestra / Landon Ronald; ^jorchestra / John Barbirolli; ^mSymphony Orchestra / Henry Wood
Somm © SOMMCD0167 (77' • DDD)
Recorded 1909-60



Here's another fascinating haul of historic Elgar recordings from

Somm expertly compiled and restored by Lani Spahr. The 77-minute programme is launched in delectable fashion with the first-ever appearance of the composer conducting his own Op 58 Elegy with the strings of Adrian Boult's magnificent BBC Symphony Orchestra. The April 1933 Abbey Road sessions took place some four and a half months before what proved to be the 76-year-old composer's final appearance in front of the HMV microphones, an afternoon in Kingsway

Hall with the LPO which produced the commercially released version of the same work. Comparative listening reveals conspicuously greater lustre and emotional urgency to the BBC SO performance.

There's more buried treasure in the form of the great Albert Sammons's premiere recording (from April 1916, with Henry Wood conducting) of the Violin Concerto, a drastically abridged affair designed to fit on to just four 78s but which nonetheless entrancingly demonstrates his sovereign technical command of – and peerless affinity for – this masterpiece. (Wood, of course, teamed up again with Sammons for their still unrivalled 1929 Columbia recording of the concerto in its entirety.) Sammons's delightful rendering of *Salut d'amour* with Gerald Moore (from May 1940 for Decca) brings up the rear, and another legendary fiddler, Alfredo Campoli, can be heard in a December 1931 version of *La capricieuse* (with pianist Harold Pinder) and leading his own Salon Orchestra in the 1932 Serenade.

Other collector's items include Sir Landon Ronald's flexible 1935 account of the darkly magnificent 1911 *Coronation March* (which enjoys impressively ample sound), Dutch contralto Maartje Offers with an unnamed orchestra and a young John Barbirolli in 'Where corals lie' from *Sea Pictures* (set down for HMV in April 1929), baritone Frederic Austin singing *The Pipes of Pan* (from March 1909) and Fred Taylor's splendidly lusty delivery of 'The Lowestoft Boat' from *The Fringes of the Fleet* (1917). Lastly, there's a private tape from 1960 courtesy of Jerrold Northrop Moore featuring Elgar's niece, May Grafton, playing a little Sonatina for piano that her uncle had written for her in 1889 when she was just seven years old.

Copiously detailed presentation and judicious transfers grace a fascinating issue that all experienced Elgarians are sure to appreciate. **Andrew Achenbach**

Handel

Water Music, HWV348-350^a

Concerto grosso, 'Alexander's Feast', HWV318^b

Göttingen Festival Orchestra /

Laurence Cummings

Accent ③ ACC26407 (63' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Stadthalle, Göttingen,

^aMay 18, 2013; ^bMay 15, 2016



Every now and then a recording's arrival equates to Christmas coming

early, and for me this was one of those. Göttingen's International Handel Festival has been releasing live recordings on the Accent label for some time, but until now they focused on the festival's operatic and choral performances. Consequently the resident FestspielOrchester Göttingen has only ever featured as accompanying ensemble, and this has felt like a trick being missed, because what Laurence Cummings produces each year with this band of period specialists – drawn from ensembles such as Les Arts Florissants and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin – is something quite unique and wonderful. It's a sound of zing, spring, heat and finesse; light-textured yet intense; multicoloured and with bristling timbres leaping so vividly into the air that you feel you actually could reach out and touch them.

So finally here they are centre stage, recorded at their 10th-anniversary concert last year in Göttingen's Stadthalle, and as for what they bring to Handel's much-recorded *Water Music*, to all the qualities listed above add lively tempos and a particularly rhythmic, dancelike feel. Highlights would be the organicism with which the flutes' gentle phrases emerge from and build on each other throughout the Sarabande. Another would be the exuberant and gorgeously shaped brass

opening to the *Allegro* preceding the *Alla Hornpipe*, which then concludes with a transitional passage of exquisitely crisp and delicate string-playing. More generally there's the gloriously perky woodwind, Cummings's merry harpsichord, and indeed an overall *joie de vivre* that builds to such a climax for the final Menuet that it's impossible not to actually smile.

These are readings which would verily sing through the open air as Handel intended, and incidentally they may also be particularly close to what Handel first wrote, because Cummings has used the new Hallische Händel-Ausgabe edition, which is based on the source thought to be the work's oldest. The concerto grosso from *Alexander's Feast* that rounds off the programme is equally top-notch, with some beautifully supple concertino playing.

I don't say this lightly, but however many recordings of Handel's *Water Music* you already own, this one is worth expanding your collection for. **Charlotte Gardner**

Krenek

'Complete Piano Concertos, Vol 2'

Piano Concerto No 4, Op 123. Concerto for Two Pianos, Op 127^a. Double Concerto for Violin and Piano, Op 124^b. Little Concerto for Piano and Organ, Op 88^c

Mikhail Korzhev, ^aEric Huebner pfs

^bNurit Pacht vn ^cAdrian Partington org

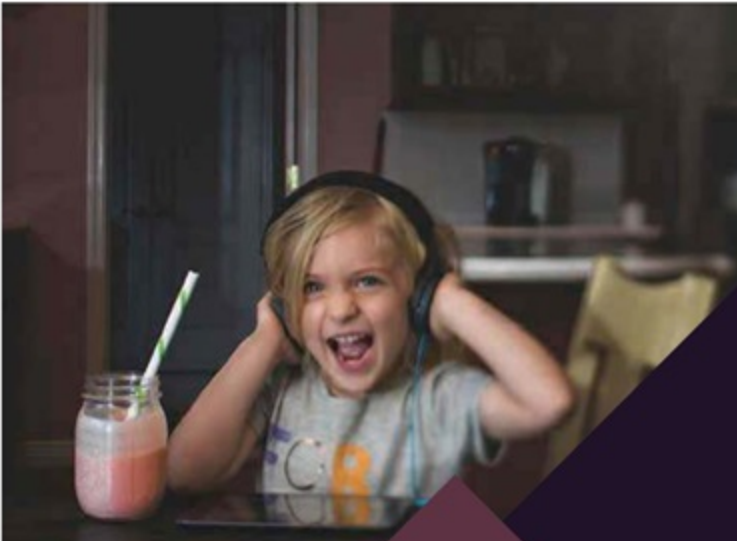
English Symphony Orchestra / Kenneth Woods


Toccata Classics ③ TOCC0392 (64' • DDD)



There are still sceptics who cling to the notion that an atonal melody is

a contradiction in terms. Such diehards would meet an elegant riposte with the opening of Krenek's Fourth Piano Concerto (1951): angular in shape, yes, but hardly more so than a minor-key quartet





Classical downloads and streaming

primephonic.com
for life on an epic scale

classical downloads & streaming

melody of Haydn, and developed with a comparable, resourceful invention. The opening percussive shimmer has become a cliché of contemporary British composers but Krenek demanded more from himself. Within its cosmopolitan, mid-century, mid-Atlantic idiom, this music is always heading somewhere with a purpose, underpinned by a thoroughgoing Austro-German understanding of harmony and counterpoint, tension and breadth, cause and effect. Émigré Schoenberg and Bartók offer points of orientation but the more eclectic, jazz-influenced Krenek surfaces halfway through the Fourth's nocturnal *Adagio*, in winding countermelodies for clarinet and trumpet that could have been written for Benny and Dizzy.

Ländlers, marches and waltzes are the stuff of the less ambitious, more suite-like constructions of the double concertos as they shift between affection, irony and even savagery. For all its evident challenges, Krenek's solo writing always sounds pianistic in the hands of Mikhail Korshev, whose touch is necessarily robust but not clangorous in spiky dialogue with Nurit Pacht's violin and afforded plenty of resounding space by the recording in the Wyastone Leys concert hall. I've only praise, too, for the supporting energy of Kenneth Woods and the English Symphony Orchestra, who play with the conviction that this is music worth believing in. **Peter Quantrill**

Leclair



Violin Concertos, Op 7 - No 1; No 3; No 4; No 5
Europa Galante / Fabio Biondi *vn*
Glossa © GCD923407 (59' • DDD)



When so much historically informed Baroque performance

necessarily incorporates a hefty proportion of guesswork, the music of violinist-composer Jean-Marie Leclair feels like repertoire that can be fallen upon with *terme à terme* (the French expression for historically faithful realisation) gusto. Not only have plentiful accounts of Leclair's own violin-playing come down to us but we also have his own words on how to approach his music. For instance, his stipulation not to vary the tempo for the sake of expression. 'What is ridiculous', he said, 'is to change the tempos of two rondeaux made as a pair, and to play the major more quickly than the minor: it is a splendid thing to brighten up the major by the manner of one's playing, but this must

be done without increasing the tempo.' Likewise he expected players to think deeper than mere speed when it came to *allegros*: 'I definitely do not mean by the term *allegro*, a tempo that is too fast', he wrote. 'The tempo is intended to be *gai*.' It seems that Leclair also practised what he preached, because contemporary descriptions paint a picture of a precise, intonationally perfect 'rigid observer of rules', who came across bright and delicate to some and rather cool to others.

With all this in mind, it feels as though Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante have hit the nail on the head with these readings of four of the Op 7 violin concertos of 1737. Brightness and delicacy reign (not coolness), their *allegros* mostly see velocity playing second fiddle to mood, and even in the face of yawning temptation it's refinement that always carries the day; compare their energetic but resolutely elegant violins in the A minor Fifth Concerto's opening *Vivace* with the up-tempo peasantry attack employed on Camerata Köln's recording (DHM).

Biondi himself equally brings a Leclair-worthy combination of tenderness and precision to his solo lines; just listen to the perfect intonation of his double-stopping in the D minor First's central aria, and the sweetness of his self-penned cadenzas. All in all, Leclair couldn't have been displayed in a more warmly faithful light. **Charlotte Gardner**

C Lindberg • Golijov

Golijov The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind^a C Lindberg The Erratic Dreams of Mr Grönstedt^b

Emil Jonason *cl*^a Vamlingbo Quartet; ^bNorrköping Symphony Orchestra / Christian Lindberg
BIS © BIS2188 (60' • DDD/DSD)



Of these two composers inspired to some extent by dreams, it's the more

easy-going Christian Lindberg who suggests that his concerto is, for that reason, as irrational as dreams can be. But *The Erratic Dreams of Mr Grönstedt* is far more to-the-point than *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*.

Lindberg's vision of a male character 'wearing a bow tie and chequered blazer' came to him in sleep; he named the fellow *Mr Grönstedt* after a Swedish cognac brand (go figure). Don't worry about concerto form or movement titles, suggests Lindberg. If you follow that advice, both the titles ('Grönstedt looks for treasures on

a rubbish heap' among them) and some idea of concerto form slip into place.

This is not music at the vanguard of innovation but in its directness of utterance, sharp evocation and keen interplay between soloist and *tutti* it is a joy. Lindberg can certainly write for orchestra but is never in demonstration mode despite the music's panache. Emil Jonason is impeccably smooth and suave, except when Lindberg asks him not to be (the pained screeches of the final movement).

Nor has Jonason any problems with the different sound world of Golijov's score for klezmer clarinet and quartet. The little cantor-like touches in Jonason's playing and his fizzy, serrated edge are highly evocative. Golijov imagines blindness as a key to musical intensity ('probably the key to great quartet-playing') but to my ears the intensity of his reflection on a 13th-century rabbi's prayers and dreams needs tightening. Science tells us that what we remember of a dream our brains tend to edit and sharpen. Lindberg appears to embrace that concept. Golijov doesn't.

Andrew Mellor

Mozart

'Mozart in Havana'

Piano Concertos - No 21, K467; No 23, K488

Simone Dinnerstein *pf* Havana Lyceum

Orchestra / José Antonio Méndez Padrón

Sony Classical © 88985 38244-2 (56' • DDD)



For her first Mozart release, Simone Dinnerstein chooses two of the composer's most deservedly popular (and oft-recorded) concertos. She plays the C major, K467, with heartfelt directness, purity of line and a way of bringing out inner counterpoints without labouring the obvious or exaggerating feminine endings in the name of 'expression'. The famous 'Elvira Madigan' slow movement is particularly telling in this regard. She plays Ferruccio Busoni's anachronistic yet wittily inventive cadenza in the *Allegro vivace assai* finale. However, she emends Busoni's terrific first-movement cadenza with treacle-coated interpolations by Philip Lasser that must be heard to be believed. They make Liberace sound like Murray Perahia!

I'm sorry Dinnerstein didn't choose the Busoni option for the A major, K488, over Mozart's less inspired original cadenza, yet she shapes her solo part with vocally informed phrasing, while goosing up bass lines with the occasional and well-warranted kick in the pants, so

to speak. She sustains her slow tempo for the *Adagio* with a wide yet subtle palette of tonal shadings and articulations, while conveying the zesty finale's joy and wit by way of crisp fingerwork and strategic left-hand accents that propel phrases over the bar lines.

As for the Havana Lyceum Orchestra, they've made great strides since I heard them perform live during that city's 2015 Mozart Festival. Intonation and ensemble values are pretty well honed, although the relatively thin string tone, often diffuse orchestral blend and general lack of nuance come up short in comparison with their European counterparts. Compare their threadbare rising string scales in K488's first-movement ritornello to the firmer, more assured Mackerras/Scottish Chamber Orchestra (Telarc) recording, just to cite one example. Part of the problem is the overly reverberant acoustic of the Oratorio San Felipe Neri, which, however, presents no problem for Dinnerstein, since her instrument is miked at a closer and clearer perspective. That said, the orchestra's potential for greatness is obvious, and so is the seriousness and fervent dedication that their music director José Antonio Méndez Padrón brings to everything he conducts. Such meaningful cross-cultural collaborations are needed now more than ever, and in an American era where the idea of building a border wall looms large, it's heartening to find Simone Dinnerstein, through music, building bridges instead.

Jed Distler

K488 – selected comparison:

O'Connor, SCO, Mackerras (TELA) CD80285

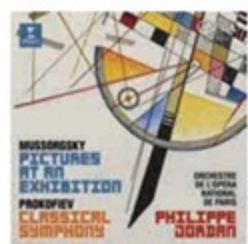
Mussorgsky • Prokofiev

Mussorgsky *Pictures at an Exhibition*

(orch Ravel) **Prokofiev** *Symphony No 1, 'Classical', Op 25*

Orchestra of the Opéra National de Paris / Philippe Jordan

Erato © 9029 58779-1 (48' • DDD)



The Orchestre de l'Opéra National de Paris play Russian repertoire very well.

In the past season I've heard them perform Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov operas with a good deal of colour. Here, released from the pit and conducted by their music director Philippe Jordan, they play Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*. It's an odd pairing and the Prokofiev comes off distinctly better.



'Impeccably smooth and suave': clarinetist Emil Jonason with composer Christian Lindberg

The performance of *Pictures* is just too pristine and lacking in character, Mussorgsky buffed up with plenty of French polish. The playing is excellent, from the cool beauty of Daniel Gremelle's saxophone solo in 'Il vecchio castello' to the silky soft strings in 'Con mortuis in lingua mortua...', but the rough edges have been sanded away to such an extent that what's left is pebble-smooth. Is this a fault of Maurice Ravel's orchestration? I don't think so. Listen to Valery Gergiev on his Mariinsky recording or – even

better – Theodore Kuchar with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine on Naxos and there's a ruggedness, an earthiness that draws out the Russian character. Jordan doesn't really dig into the darker portraits in Mussorgsky's gallery – the grotesque 'Gnomus' or the sinister 'Hut on Fowl's Legs' – although he does benefit from a fabulous recording where the bass-drum thwacks really register.

The delicate 'Frenchified' numbers are elegant: 'Limoges' prattles pleasantly and the children in the Jardin des Tuileries are

somewhat well behaved. Jordan's chicks dance daintily, metronomically, in their shells, but turn to the Russians and there's a quirky giddiness to their chicks, almost tripping over in their eagerness, which is genuinely funny. The highlight comes at the very end, with an expansive 'Great Gate of Kiev' (or, more correctly, 'The Bogatyr Gates', as given in the track-listing) in which the bell thunders out.

After this, the *Classical* Symphony is played with panache, the glossy Parisian veneer perfect for Prokofiev's Haydn-esque wit. Woodwind solos are exquisitely played, especially the garrulous flute passages in the helter-skelter finale. The OdP orchestra probably performs the Gavotte a good deal (Prokofiev later used it in his ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, never far from the Paris stage) and it's cheekily dispatched here. But would you buy a disc for a *Classical* Symphony? **Mark Pullinger**

Pictures at an Exhibition – selected comparisons:

Ukraine Nat SO, Kuchar (5/03) (NAXO) 8 555924

Mariinsky Orch, Gergiev (4/15) (MARI) MAR0553

Röntgen

Symphonies – No 9, 'The Bitonal'; No 21.

Serenade

Brandenburg State Orchestra, Frankfurt /

David Porcelijn

CPO (P) CPO777 120-2 (56' • DDD)



In a break with protocol, you'll find a pretty honest appraisal of the music on this disc in its own booklet. 'What composer who wrote modern music in all seriousness would ever have given a symphony the nickname "bitonal"?' asks annotator Jurjen Vis. Moving on to the symphony numbered 21, Vis addresses Röntgen's main theme: 'nowhere does this first subject receive the fugal treatment it deserves.' As for Röntgen's Serenade, Vis lets another composer's lukewarm response do the talking: Grieg apparently described the Serenade as 'very lyrical' but 'had nothing more to say about it.'

And there isn't much more to say. The Serenade often resembles clean, functional but servile ballet music until it finally generates something of a frisson. The symphonies here are rather more interesting but no less frustrating. Röntgen was trying to prove a point in his *Bitonal* Symphony and as a result the bitonal elements stick out like a sore thumb. That's nobody's idea of advancing tonality, particularly when the symphony's most heartfelt passages have clearly rushed for

the cover of a single key. Most frustrating is that there's a finely spun piece lurking somewhere within. If Röntgen had forgotten about bitonality altogether it might well have emerged.

Vis describes Symphony No 21 as 'earnest' and he's spot-on once again. Röntgen can't keep up his Brucknerian churning and transitioning for long and we end up with a theme-and-variations that's heavy-handed and heavy-footed too. Sometimes Röntgen has a neat idea but his orchestration isn't imaginative enough to do it justice, even though the attractive-sounding Frankfurt orchestra give it their all. One for hardcore Röntgen fans, or anyone who wants a CD-size reproduction of Van Gogh's gorgeous *Moonlit Landscape*.

Andrew Mellor

Saint-Saëns

'Piano Concertos, Vol 2'

Piano Concerto No 3, Op 29. Africa, Op 89.

Caprice-Valse, 'Wedding Cake', Op 76.

Rhapsodie d'Auvergne, Op 73

Romain Deschamps pf Malmö

Symphony Orchestra / Marc Soustrot

Naxos (M) 8 573477 (57' • DDD)



I was a bit sniffy about this team's First and Second Concertos (6/17), which I felt

were perfectly good if you hadn't already got the leading contenders – Stephen Hough or Jean-Marie Darré (EMI) in both, or Benjamin Grosvenor if you just wanted No 2. The same reservations apply to this volume, but slightly less so.

Saint-Saëns's Third Concerto is, like the First, woefully underplayed and underrated. It is in the traditional three-movement fast-slow-fast format but, within that, what a wealth of originality is found, beginning with the succession of rippling piano arpeggios which opens the first movement. These give way to a subject that, as Dominic Wells observes in his succinct and informative booklet, 'bears more than a passing resemblance to the opening theme of Schubert's Ninth Symphony'. Then turn to the harmonically adventurous second movement and its ambiguous tonality, and the boisterous pyrotechnics of the finale. What is there not to like?

There's no avoiding the fact that Hough and Darré revel in Saint-Saëns's pianistic *joie de vivre* more overtly than Romain Deschamps. As in the earlier volume, his tempos are markedly slower – a definite minus in the finale – and yet certain aspects

of the music are experienced more powerfully than on either Hough or Darré's recordings. Try the passage (marked *marcatissimo*) from 0'39" to 1'00" at the beginning of the third movement.

Again in *Africa*, one of the composer's most colourful creations (rarely, if ever, heard in concert, of course), Deschamps can sound flat-footed compared with the incomparable Hough – but the climax of the piece (at 7'01", where Saint-Saëns introduces a theme based on a Tunisian folk tune) is carried off with a nonchalant swagger that I found irresistible, the triangle adding a curious buzzing effect. The warmth and depth of the orchestral contribution and Marc Soustrot's eye for detail are significant bonuses and, moreover, I marginally prefer the recorded sound and ambience to the Hough versions – which, however, I would never desert. So, overall, less to be sniffy about than the previous volume. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Selected comparison – coupled as above:

Hough, CBSO, Oramo (11/01) (HYPE) CDA67331/2

Schmidt • R Strauss

Schmidt Symphony No 2

R Strauss Intermezzo – Träumerei am Kamin

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra /

Semyon Bychkov

Sony Classical (P) 88985 35552-2 (55' • DDD)



Semyon Bychkov and the Vienna Philharmonic brought Franz

Schmidt's Second Symphony to the BBC Proms in September 2015, only a matter of days after making this recording in Vienna's Musikverein. It's as apparent here as much as it was in that concert the amount of affection with which both orchestra and conductor approach the work. And the recording suggests that even the Musikverein itself, sounding cushioned and clear, is holding the piece in a warm embrace – perhaps rather a little too warm in Sony's smooth engineering.

The booklet reminds us of Schmidt's many roles in Viennese musical life of the first half of the 20th century (including as a cellist in the opera house orchestra under Mahler), and of the fact that his status as a pillar of the musical establishment there perhaps amplified some critical views from beyond the Austrian capital. The damaging assessment of him as having been big on craftsmanship but rather short on inspiration, for example, has stuck.

And initially the Second Symphony of 1913 might seem to back it up. It's

an essentially sunny and pastoral work of shifting, beautifully dappled colours. There are disparate hints of Strauss, Reger, Bruckner and others, as well a couple of passages that look forward to the intense string-writing of Schmidt's famous Intermezzo from *Notre Dame*, composed the following year.

But the piece takes a meandering course through a series of musical vistas that never quite seem to have time to develop into anything immediately concrete. And this effect seems to be emphasised by the performance here, which, unlike Neeme Järvi's more robust account with the Chicago Symphony (Chandos), determinedly lets the music develop at its own pace: Bychkov is not a conductor to seek out cheap thrills.

With each listen, though, I found myself worrying less about Schmidt's elusive, elliptical way with melody, or the fact that he presents climaxes that seem never to really offer answers. With this recording, one starts to admire what he achieves with the variations on his not terribly promising theme in the second movement, for example, and the slow-burn momentum of the initially underwhelming finale.

Whether the subtle seductiveness of the Viennese orchestra serves him better

than the brassier, more forthright approach of the Chicago players might be down to personal taste, but this new recording makes a persuasive case for a work of considerable beauty. It's an important addition to the catalogue. A gentle, tender account of Strauss's most famous Intermezzo interlude makes a charming if hardly generous coupling. **Hugo Shirley**

Schmidt – selected comparison:

Chicago SO, N Järvi (3/90) (CHAN) CHAN9568*

Shostakovich

Symphony No 8, Op 65

SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart /

Andrey Boreyko

SWR Music © SWR19037CD (66' • DDD)



Andrey Boreyko, best known to record buyers as a skilful proponent of

contemporary or near-contemporary music from the ex-Soviet bloc, has also been setting down a Shostakovich cycle with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, of which he was lately principal guest conductor. Whether there will be further instalments is anyone's guess now that the 70-year-old ensemble has been compelled

to merge with the Baden-Baden- and Freiburg-based South West German Radio Symphony. Competition in these works is of course much fiercer than it is for comparable long-form pieces by Schnittke, Silvestrov or Górecki.

Boreyko's Eighth proves to be expert, dignified and spacious, captured in compensatingly immediate sound and shorn of applause. That said, the reading is likely to disappoint those who look for a modern recording to replicate the ferocious intensity and paint-stripping brass of Yevgeny Mravinsky's 1982 concert relay (now pitch-corrected after earlier anomalies). In Stuttgart we are trapped in a sonic mausoleum, at least until Boreyko's initially friskier account of the finale. Even there the return of first-movement material feels heavy-handed.

Competition is offered by two recent recordings from Western orchestras under conductors born on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Of these it's Vasily Petrenko's RLPO that sounds most 'genuine' at the start, the strings in particular projecting their long sustained lines with remarkable authority and weight. The Stuttgart band may have been used to making stylistic adaptations under Roger Norrington but their sonority can seem a little non-specific by comparison, albeit less

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

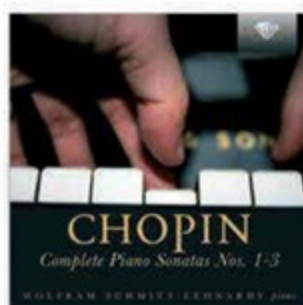
BRILLIANT CLASSICS

Just some of the superb releases for Summer 2017

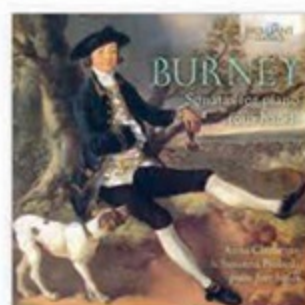


HANDEL IN ITALY
Cantatas, Arias and Serenata

14 CD-Box
95496BR



1CD 95809BR



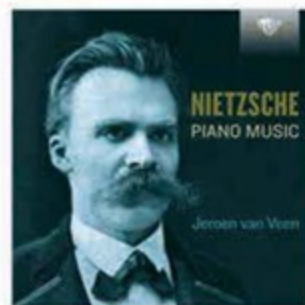
2CD 95447BR



1CD PCL10126



3CD 95103BR



1CD 95492BR



1CD PCL10127

RSK

www.rskentertainment.co.uk

EUROPADISC

www.europadisc.co.uk

MDT

www.mdt.co.uk

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

www.prestoclassical.co.uk

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

www.brilliantclassics.com



Aldeburgh Winds and Strings make a 'glorious sound' on their Linn recording of Richard Strauss

plush than Andris Nelsons's Bostonians, their direction of travel less sure. True, the woodwind are up for it in the first scherzo, sacrificing beauty of tone for pungent Soviet-era expressivity, not that I cared for that movement's deliberately clumsified pay-off. Much the same scrunching of gears happens at the end of the next. While the ensuing *Largo* is certainly deliberate, it was even slower and more poignant in the work's first Western recording under André Previn (EMI, 10/73). And, authentic or not, Previn raced through the preceding scherzos with irresistible flair. We seem to have forgotten that this battleship-grey music is the product of a young man's imagination. Boreyko, like most latter-day interpreters, is respectful, even stolid.

In short, while this package would make a fine memento of an evening out, there are better choices for remote collectors. The more so given that the English-language booklet notes are speculative, confused and poorly translated. **David Gutman**

Selected comparisons:

Leningrad PO, Mravinsky (6/89*) (ALTO) ALC1150

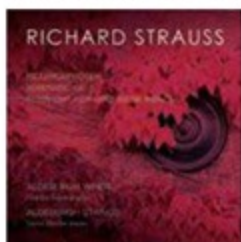
RLPO, Petrenko (8/10) (NAXO) 8 572392

Boston SO, Nelsons (8/16) (DG) 479 5201GH2

R Strauss

Metamorphosen^a. Serenade, Op 7^b.
Sonatina No 2, 'Fröhliche Werkstatt'^b

Aldeburgh^b Winds and^a Strings /
^bNicholas Daniel, ^aMarkus Däunert
Linn © CKD538 (78' • DDD)



Richard Strauss didn't do himself any favours when he called his late compositions 'wrist exercises', and I'll confess that previous encounters with his wind music have occasionally brought that unworthy thought to mind. This new recording of his 1944-45 symphony for wind instruments (Sonatina No 2) from Aldeburgh Winds – a sort of supergroup of Britten-Pears Orchestra alumni – is a different matter. Listen to the introduction to the finale: the sepulchral richness of those Wagnerian chords, the eloquence and colour of the solo responses and most of all, the spaciousness – the way the group's director Nicholas Daniel places each phrase. Strauss never actually called the piece a symphony but here it feels like one.

Daniel's feeling for Strauss's long-range ebb and flow is one of the great attractions of this disc; you get the impression he's happy to oversee the general pacing and balance and then trust his players to do the rest. And rightly: they make a glorious sound. A full-fat horn section, in particular, gives a wonderfully Bavarian, Baron Ochs sort of feel to the early Serenade Op 7. But throughout, there's enough character and clarity of attack to keep the whole thing buoyant – and to defy the luxurious temptations of Strauss's cushions of horn and clarinet tone.

Metamorphosen is slightly more problematic. The string-playing, as you'd expect, is beautiful enough, and the tastefully applied portamentos only occasionally sound self-conscious. Tempos are on the broad side. But much of the secret of Strauss lies in the transitions; and while not every performance can generate Karajan-like levels of emotional intensity, Markus Däunert's direction seems to lack – well, a wholly convincing sense of direction. This is a good, musicianly *Metamorphosen*. But it glows rather than burns.

Richard Bratby

**NEW DIGITAL-ONLY RELEASE FROM
THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY**

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS

BERG

Three Pieces for Orchestra, Opus 6

SFSmedia

"When Thomas and the Symphony musicians are all moving together as one, through sparse soundscapes and massed music onslaughts, the effect can be transfixing." —San Francisco Chronicle



Experience one of the finest examples of Berg's brilliant artistry with this work of tragic premonition and drama in live performances by Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony. Available for streaming and download in stereo, 5.1 surround, Mastered for iTunes quality, and 192kHz 24-bit Studio Master.

AVAILABLE NOW!
VISIT SFSYMPHONY.ORG/BERG

SFS Media celebrates its 15-year anniversary this season, visit sfsymphony.org/sfsmedia for a complete catalogue.

SFS Media recordings are distributed in the U.S. and Canada by the [PIAS] Group via RED Distribution and Sony Music Canada, in the UK by Proper Music, through Avie Records internationally, and by The Orchard to digital retailers.



**SAN FRANCISCO
SYMPHONY**
MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS - MUSIC DIRECTOR

SFSmedia



**THOMAS
NICKELL**
P I A N O

COPLAND RODEO
GERSHWIN RHAPSODY IN BLUE
DVOŘÁK NEW WORLD SYMPHONY

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN
DAVID CURTIS, CONDUCTOR

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Tuesday 11 July & Saturday 22 July 2017, 7:30 pm
Stratford ArtsHouse

LICHFIELD

Wednesday 12 July 2017, 7:30 pm
Lichfield Cathedral

LONDON

Friday 14 July 2017, 7:30 pm
Four Seasons Hotel at Park Lane

www.thomasnickell.com

ORCHESTRA
OF THE
SWAN



FOUR SEASONS
Hotels and Resorts



Suk

Symphony, 'Asrael', Op 27

Essen Philharmonic Orchestra / Tomáš Netopil

Oehms (F) OC1865 (60' • DDD)



Suk's great memorial symphony to his father-in-law Dvořák and his own wife is indelibly associated on disc with the Czech Philharmonic, its very singular sound world – most particularly among the brass and woodwinds – bringing this most mysterious of early 20th-century symphonic masterpieces into close proximity with nature. You need only sample Charles Mackerras's Czech Phil Supraphon recording, either in the scherzo or the fugal section of the finale, to hear how Tomáš Netopil and his far mellower Essener Philharmoniker lack bite.

But that's only part of the story. Much of *Asrael* – an essentially non-programmatic work, although the title refers to the angel of death according to Islam, Sikhism and some Hebrew lore – is elegiac, the symphony's close recalling the latter part of Liszt's *A Faust Symphony*. Perhaps its most affecting passages are in the fourth-movement *Adagio*; and although Netopil captures the music's signature solemnity, you need only turn to Václav Talich's premiere Czech Philharmonic version (Talich knew Suk well) to feel an added emotional swell. Suddenly it's as if the call across the years has vanished: Talich's *Asrael* is the only place to start if you really want to access the work's bared soul. Mackerras comes very close but then he learnt the work from Talich, and his fine performance certainly echoes his master's voice.

That said, I should point out that this is the premiere recording of the new Bärenreiter Urtext score (the first-ever scholarly edition of *Asrael*), so that if textual minutiae take precedence over the grander, grittier picture then this is obviously a 'must have' version, maybe as a supplement to other recordings you happen to own. And it is very good, but for me the Czech Philharmonic versions under Talich, Neumann, Pešek, Mackerras (all on Supraphon) and Bělohlávek (Chandos, 5/92, as well as his version with the BBC Symphony – Supraphon, 10/12) take the edge, principally because they promote a sound that better fits the work's mood and language. Rafael Kubelík with the Bavarian Radio Symphony (Panton, 1/94) offers another gripping performance, one

much to be recommended. Incidentally, Sir Simon Rattle has a compelling way with this piece. He too should record it.

Rob Cowan

Selected comparisons:

Czech PO, Talich (6/54^R, 11/06) (SUPR) SU3830-2

Czech PO, Mackerras (6/11) (SUPR) SU4043-2

Tansman

Bric à brac^a. Sextuor^b

Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra /

^bLukasz Borowicz, ^aWojciech Michniewski

CPO (F) CPO777 987-2 (55' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Tansman Festival, Poland,

^aOctober 9, 2002; ^bNovember 19, 2014



Interest in Tansman's music in recent years has led to a large number of recordings but none so far as I am aware of any of his ballets has yet made it on to silver disc. Both *Sextuor* (1923) and *Bric à brac* (1935) have whimsical scenarios by the composer's friend Alexandre Arnoux. *Sextuor* is an 18-minute 'ballet-bouffe' centring on a love triangle between a flighty flute, a gigolo-like violin and a staid but by no means dispassionate cello. There are important supporting roles for a trombone, a drum and – opening and closing the ballet – a tuning fork.

Tansman's music is a delight, by turns light and airy, dark and passionate – not without sombre episodes (the course of true love does not run smooth, alas, for the cello) – and artfully scored. The harmonic idiom may not seem overly advanced now but for the time was, like all of his music during this period, enough to outrage critics in his native Poland. Lukasz Borowicz directs a brilliantly sure-footed account.

A violin plays an important role in Tansman's much larger *Bric à brac*, set in a street market where a pair of thieves are distracted from their nefarious endeavours when one of them falls madly in love with the shopper, Diana. In parallel, a poor busker repairs an old violin (actually a Stradivarius) and in trying it out transports all present into a magical otherworld. Tansman's music is more romantically inclined, Gershwin-esque in places, with a wonderfully over-the-top waltz at its climax. Wojciech Michniewski's account, recorded back in 2002, catches its atmosphere to a T. If neither score is world-shakingly great music, both are expertly crafted, beautifully scored and fun to hear, especially in such clear sound.

Guy Rickards

Tchaikovsky

Serenade for Strings, Op 48. Souvenir de

Florence, Op 70. Valse sentimentale, Op 51 No 6

(arr WE Schmidt)^a. Nocturne, Op 19 No 4^a.

October, Op 37a No 10^a

Metamorphosen Berlin /

Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt^avc

Sony Classical (F) 88985 42224-2 (82' • DDD)



Spot the Ponte Vecchio – however blurred the photograph – on a CD cover and it's a fair bet that Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* is on the disc, probably programmed with the *Serenade* for Strings. Double points for this Sony Classical release featuring Metamorphosen Berlin then, even if the title 'Serenade' doesn't entirely give the game away. Founded in 2010, Metamorphosen Berlin is led by cellist Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt, hence the three extra items sandwiched between the main courses here, arrangements of miniatures for cello and string orchestra (two by Schmidt himself).

The 19-strong string ensemble makes a big-boned sound, closely miked, as is the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra on Pentatone. It launches into the *Souvenir de Florence* with bold confidence, although at a slower tempo than the Vienna Chamber Orchestra on Naxos – a longtime favourite recording of this familiar coupling. Schmidt again encourages long-breathed phrasing in the elegiac *Adagio cantabile*, unusually reverting to the work's sextet origins in giving the romantic theme to solo violin, viola and cello. Indira Koch (leader) caresses her solo line while Andreas Willwohl (viola) and Janina Ruh (cello) turn it into a trio of immense beauty and repose – more intimate than massed strings swooning away (but then, I prefer the sextet version of this work). The latter movements, more Russian in character, are taken vigorously.

The *Serenade* for Strings gets a fine performance, on the brink of tragedy in a very restrained speed for the 'Élégie', Metamorphosen Berlin taking a much broader tempo than the VCO (10'43" as opposed to 9'06"). The famous Waltz goes with a gentle lilt and the finale is vigorously played. In the shorter numbers, Schmidt leads a wistful *Valse sentimentale*, while October from *The Seasons* particularly suits the cello spotlight, his glowing tone warm and inviting. **Mark Pullinger**

Souvenir, Serenade – selected comparisons:

Vienna CO, Entremont (10/91) (NAXO) 8 550404

Concertgebouw CO, Boni (PENT) PTC5186 009

Telemann

'Concerti per molti stromenti'

Concertos: TWV43:G5 - Adagio; TWV44 - 32; 43; TWV53 - d1; F1; h1; TWV54 - D2; D3

Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin

Harmonia Mundi © HMM90 2261 (72' • DDD)



In these historical performance-aware times it's now a comparatively rare

event for a Baroque recording to throw up a genuine slice of musical-instrument exoticism. However, that's precisely what the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin have managed with this Telemann programme of multi-instrument concertos, thanks to the presence of the B minor Concerto, TWV53:h1, whose solo trio consists of two flutes and a...calchedon.

Now in fact the calchedon is simply a specific type of large, six-course, long-necked lute also known as a galizona. Furthermore, calchedons or galizonas actually appear in over 400 of Telemann's works, used primarily as a bass-line instrument. And indeed that's how the one here appears, meaning that it's not going to sound as exotic to your ears as it looks on paper. Still, its mere presence on

this recording (lutenist Michael Friemuth playing a copy of an instrument made in Prague in either 1718 or 1728), and indeed the page of the booklet notes dedicated to explaining it, illustrates the sheer degree of joyful, historically aware, multi-timbral music-making going on across these eight works. It really is a varied feast too; among the other solo groupings are three horns and violin, two oboes and bass, three oboes and three violins, and perhaps the most delightfully timbred one of all, Concerto TWV53:F1 for mandolin, hammer dulcimer (strings stretched over a trapezoidal sounding board), harp and strings.

Of course timbres alone do not a high-quality recording make. However, to all the above the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin have added warm tonal brilliance and depth, bristling textures and a smartly nimble perkiness, and the result is a superbly colourful listen that ticks all possible boxes.

Charlotte Gardner

Walton

Violin Concerto^a. Partita. Sptfire Prelude and Fugue. Variations on a Theme by Hindemith

^aAnthony Marwood *vn* BBC Scottish

Symphony Orchestra / Martyn Brabbins

Hyperion © CDA67986 (81' • DDD)

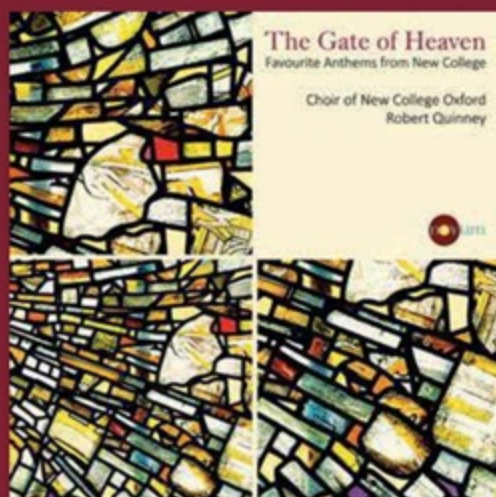


Having already given us impressive versions of the two symphonies (Hyperion, 10/11),

Martyn Brabbins and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra turn their sights on a further clutch of Walton masterworks.

Proceedings are launched in fine style with a supremely affectionate and agreeably lithe account of the immensely personable concerto that Walton conceived for the great Jascha Heifetz. Anthony Marwood proves an enviably secure and articulate soloist, and if Tasmin Little (Chandos) manages to convey a tad greater warmth, caprice and flair (her alliance with Edward Gardner and the BBC SO is an especially gratifying one), he and Brabbins nonetheless generate a nourishing rapport, and their consistently absorbing performance will unquestionably give lasting pleasure.

Next comes the by turns exuberant and sultry Partita that Walton wrote in 1957 as a showpiece for George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra. That same legendary team, of course, went on to make a dazzling recording of it as well as the superb 1963 *Variations on a Theme by Hindemith*, so it's



novum
NEW RELEASES

Robert Quinney

directs the Choir of New College Oxford

The Gate of Heaven: Favourite Anthems from New College NCR 1391

This new collection celebrates anthems with Oxford connections. Well-loved favourites by Harris and Stanford are set alongside new works by contemporary composers Matthew Martin and Rhian Samuel to demonstrate the continuing commitment by choirs such as New College to keep reinventing and enriching the anthem and its place in English music.

HARRIS • STANFORD • MARTIN • FINZI • HADLEY • SAMUEL

Like as the Hart: Music for The Templar's Garden NCR1392

The words of Psalm 42, 'Like as the Hart desireth the waterbrooks', have inspired a rich variety of settings from composers over the centuries. This selection has been compiled to accompany the novel *The Templar's Garden* by Catherine Clover in which the psalm plays a key part. It includes rarely performed masterpieces, one of the twentieth century's best loved anthems and two new settings commissioned specially for this album.

OCKEGHEM • PALESTRINA • TALLIS • TAVERNER • SCHÜTZ • PITTS • BUXTEHUDE • HANDEL • HOWELLS • L'ESTRANGE

The Templar's Garden, by Catherine Clover is available from Blackwells Bookshop.
www.bookshop.blackwell.co.uk/bookshop

www.newcollegechoir.com | Distributed by Select Music 01737 645 600

amazon.co.uk

some measure of these scrupulously alert newcomers' achievement that they do not emerge disgraced from the comparison. In fact, Brabbins's uncommonly cogent and commendably observant treatment of the Variations strikes me as just about the best I've encountered since Vernon Handley's characteristically unforced and wonderfully perceptive 1988 Bournemouth SO account (last available on a British Composers reissue, 5/06). The *Spitfire Prelude and Fugue* (which Walton fashioned from his score for the 1942 film *The First of the Few*) makes a roistering bonus.

Bundle in Hyperion's superior production values, detailed annotation by Robert Matthew-Walker and some most attractive artwork, and it all adds up to a thoroughly desirable package.

Andrew Achenbach

Violin Concerto – selected comparison:

Little, BBC SO, Gardner (7/14) (CHAN) CHSA5136

'Flux'

'New Music – New Dance'

Bowden *Airs No Oceans Keep*^a **Frances-Hoad**

The Madness Industry^b **Higgins** *Atomic Café*^c

Quinta *Themistocles is Captured*^d **Whitley** *Duo*^e

^aEloisa-Fleur Thom *vn* ^aAsher Zaccardelli *va*

^dQuinta *magnetic resonator pf/vn/elects* ^aFidelio Trio;

^bOnyx Brass; ^cRambert Orchestra / Paul Hoskins

NMC Ⓢ NMCD232 (56' • DDD)



Flux represents five recipients of Rambert Dance Company's Music Fellowship scheme. Established by the company's music director Paul Hoskins in 2009, the advantages of such a scheme are obvious: the year-long fellowship enables composers to engage and collaborate over a more prolonged period with dancers and directors, immersing themselves in the technical elements and principles of the form.

First up is Gavin Higgins's *Atomic Café*, whose bright, pop-art-style title is in fact a reference to a satirical film from the 1980s on how to survive a nuclear attack. The idea of opening a piece on a single pitch has been turned into a modernist mannerism by many spectral composers but Higgins's purposeful long-held opening D is poised for action. It soon shatters into a series of semitonal particles before finally exploding into a devilish doomsday dance.

Atomic Café's connection with physical movement is obvious but Mark Bowden's *Airs No Oceans Keep* is more difficult to intuit. Played with power and precision by the Fidelio Trio, it can't seem to decide

whether it wants to float on a sea of sweet consonance or plunge headlong into a dissonant vortex. Cheryl Frances-Hoad's *The Madness Industry*, for brass quintet, takes its cue from a book that tries to define psychopathic tendencies. The result is a comically disturbing work full of dark one-liners, gags and punchlines.

On the other end of the scale is Kate Whitley's delicately floating Duo for violin and viola, which brilliantly captures the dichotomy between stasis and movement in Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture *Wrestlers*. But the most original and distinctive voice is heard on Quinta's *Themistocles is Captured*, whose post-minimal soundscape is held in flux by delicately pulsing rhythms on magnetic resonator piano and electronically manipulated violin. Another NMC treat. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

'Mind Music'

'Music Related to Neurodegenerative Conditions'

Adams *Gnarly Buttons* **K Malone** *The Last*

Memory **Mendelssohn** *Concert Piece No 1,*

Op 113 **R Strauss** *Sonatina No 1, 'From an*

Invalid's Workshop'

Elizabeth Jordan *cls/basset-hn* **Lynsey Marsh** *cl*

Northern Chamber Orchestra / Stephen Barlow

Divine Art Ⓢ Ⓣ DDA25138 (88' • DDD)



As the title indicates, on this disc the composers, performers and the music itself are linked by depression, Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's. The recording followed a 2014 fundraising concert put together by the two soloists, who had both lost a parent to Parkinson's. John Adams's *Gnarly Buttons* (1996) and Kevin Malone's *The Last Memory* (for solo clarinet and digital tape delay; 1996) arose in part from their fathers' struggles with Alzheimer's. Strauss's magisterially misnamed *Sonatina* may be the result of wartime influenza and depression (occasioned by the destruction of the Munich Court Theatre). Only Mendelssohn's *Concert Piece* is unencumbered by association, though its composer's early death has been linked potentially with a Parkinson's-like ailment.

With all proceeds from the sales being donated to Parkinson's charities, this two-CD set is immensely worthwhile. The performances are immaculate. Rarely have I have been so engaged in this repertoire as by the Northern Chamber Orchestra's accounts. The Strauss in particular is a delight, the kind of performance that convinces – were it needed – that these

'wrist exercises' (Strauss's self-deprecating term) do have lasting value. *Gnarly Buttons* is rendered with electric virtuosity by soloist (Jordan) and orchestra, while Lynsey Marsh's performance of Malone's discomforting *The Last Memory* is haunting.

Production values are first-rate, with excellent sound and an informative booklet note supplemented by a 'music therapist's view' from Jonathan Trout. In a world where music tuition and therapy are under siege from politico-economic philistinism, this is an important release. Go buy it!

Guy Rickards

'New York'

Cage *Music for Wind Instruments* **Carter**

Clarinet Concerto^a **Feldman** *Instruments I*

Fulmer *Within his bending sickle's compass*

come^b **Reich** *WTC 9/11* **S Shepherd** *Blur*

Varèse *Intégrales*

^aJérôme Comte *cl* ^bJens McManama *hn*

Ensemble Intercontemporain / Matthias Pintscher

Alpha Ⓢ Ⓣ ALPHA274 (105' • DDD)



Edgard Varèse's *Intégrales* – completed in 1925, 10 years after he

first set sail for Manhattan – acts as a salient reminder that New York City is all about the itch and joy of discovery. Varèse's serrated-edge brass, cluster-bomb woodwind and the intelligent chatter of his percussion-writing still sound, all these years later, like we're being granted unique dispensation to eavesdrop on sounds of the future. Elliott Carter's overcooked and fussy *Clarinet Concerto*, written as recently as 1996, by comparison already sounds like music set in aspic – and this two-CD survey of music from New York revolves around those two polarities.

Matthias Pintscher divides his time between New York (where he teaches at the Juilliard School) and Paris (he has been music director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain since last year), but attempting to take the temperature of New York music without including any work from black or Asian composers – and all these composers are male – feels like a lost opportunity. David Fulmer's *Within his bending sickle's compass come* and Sean Shepherd's *Blur* might have been written in New York but their slickly schooled pieces could equally have slotted into a round-up of the sort of fare presented regularly at central European new music festivals.

Steve Reich's plundering (and looping) of emotive voice recordings captured



'Multi-timbral music-making': members of the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin prepare to record Telemann in Berlin's Teldex Studio - see review on page 43

during New York's darkest day for his September 11 memorial *WTC 9/11* has always left me feeling uncomfortable, and I wonder what place John Cage's 1938 *Music for Wind Instruments* – jaunty little divertimento-like pieces written while he was living on the West Coast – really has in this context. A cleanly executed and spacious performance of Morton Feldman's *Instruments I* (1974) returns us to the concentration on pure sound that Varèse (whom Feldman greatly admired) unleashed at the opening. This is a problematic set in both its conception and, especially in the Varèse and Carter, the instrumental attack, which lacks rudeness, grit and fight.

Philip Clark

'Strauss in St Petersburg'

J Strauss II *Abschied von St Petersburg*, Op 210. *Alexander-Quadrille*, Op 33. *Alexandrin-Polka*, Op 198. *An der Wolga*, Op 425. *Auf zum Tanze!*, Op 436. *Bauern-Polka*, Op 276^a. *Hofball-Quadrille*, Op 116. *Grossfürsten-Marsch*, Op 107. *Grossfürstin Alexandra-Walzer*, Op 181. *Krönungs-Marsch*, Op 183. *Newa-Polka*, Op 288. *Olga-Polka*, Op 196. *Persischer Marsch*, Op 289. *Russischer Marsch*, Op 426. *Russische Marsch-Fantasie*, Op 353. *St Petersburg*, Op 255. *Vergnügungszug*, Op 281.

Wein, Weib und Gesang!, Op 333

Smirnitskaya *Erste Liebe*, Op 14^b

J Strauss II/Josef Strauss *Pizzicato-Polka*

^b**Olga Zaitseva** *sop* **Estonian National** ^a**Male Choir and Symphony Orchestra** / **Neeme Järvi**
Chandos © CHAN10937 (83' • DDD • T/t)



The prime mover for this delightful collection is Vauxhall – not south of the Thames in London but a 17-mile rail route from St Petersburg to the terminus at Pavlovsk where, in 1838, a Vauxhall pavilion was constructed and music regularly played there. London's famous Vauxhall Gardens had inspired the idea (that's where the Russian word for railway station – 'voksal' – originates) and among the most notable conductors to grace the site was Johann Strauss II, who appeared there for 11 seasons. Neeme Järvi and his robust Estonian forces have put together a programme made up largely of Russian-themed pieces, *Grossfürstin Alexandra-Walzer* ('Grand Duchess Alexandra Waltz'), for example, composed by Strauss in response to receiving a lavish present from the Grand Duchess herself, namely a diamond ring.

The wide expressive range of *My Farewell to St Petersburg* amounts, like so many of the finest Strauss family masterpieces, to an eight-minute tone poem and it's good that *Wine, Woman and Song!* is presented complete with its three-and-a-half minute introduction. Among the novelties included is *Erste Liebe* ('First Love') by Olga Smirnitskaya (who Strauss was madly in love with), sung with affecting simplicity by Olga Zaitseva.

As Peter Kemp relates in his consistently revealing booklet notes, after siding with the revolutionaries during the 1848 Vienna Revolution, Johann Strauss II was *persona non grata* in court circles. All that changed four years later when, at the instigation of younger members of the imperial family, he was put in charge of dance entertainments at court, a happy state of affairs that gave rise to the exuberant and varied *Hofball-Quadrille*.

So many stories and anecdotes, so much musical entertainment; 20 tracks in all, with a handful of perennials scattered among the rarities, a veritable party-pack of Strauss family exotica. Järvi's performances are spirited and straightforward. Most enjoyable.

Rob Cowan

Mahler's Rückert-Lieder

Alice Coote talks to James Jolly about one of Gustav Mahler's most intense sets of songs

For Hugo Wolf it was Eduard Mörike, for Robert Schumann it was Heinrich Heine, and for Gustav Mahler it was Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) – three extraordinary partnerships between composer and poet, as Richard Wigmore reminded us in his *Gramophone* Collection on the *Rückert-Lieder* (1/13). In the case of Mahler, the poetry of Rückert – translator, philologist and professor of Oriental languages – struck a chord with Mahler that would result not only in the five *Rückert-Lieder* (1901-02) but also in the *Kindertotenlieder* (1901-04). And one can't but help imagine that Rückert's Eastern-influenced aesthetic also opened Mahler's eyes and ears to the possibilities of Hans Bethge's translations of Chinese poetry that would result in the song-symphony *Das Lied von der Erde* (1908-09).

Alice Coote has recorded the orchestral versions of both the *Rückert-Lieder* and the *Kindertotenlieder* (plus the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*) with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra under Marc Albrecht for Pentatone, but it's the first work that we choose to focus on. The mezzo-soprano comes prepared, armed with a handful of scores, from the full orchestral to a miniature score – all elaborately annotated.

The first thing to say about the *Rückert-Lieder* is that they do not comprise a song-cycle. They are five separate songs, usually performed as a group but – and it's quite a big but – in an order chosen by the performer, and very few recordings adhere to the same sequence. Alice Coote opts for: (1) 'Ich atmet' einen linden Duft'; (2) 'Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder'; (3) 'Liebst du um Schönheit'; (4) 'Um Mitternacht'; and (5) 'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen'. By comparison, Janet Baker and Barbirolli chose 2,1,4,3,5 (as did Fassbaender and Chailly), Ludwig and Karajan 5,3,2,1,4, and Kožená and Rattle 3,2,4,1,5. The order is an obvious opening sortie. 'I think one powerful influence is what you've grown up with – you just expect a particular song to come next,' Coote explains. 'But for a recording, someone like the producer sometimes reorders it later. The only thing that really upsets me is if anything follows "Ich bin der Welt". I can't go anywhere after that piece. That's the only really strong feeling I have when it comes to the order. When you're recording them you tend to do them in an order that works best for the different orchestral groupings anyway.' ('Um Mitternacht', for example, dispenses with all strings, 'Ich atmet' omits cellos and basses but adds a celesta, and so on.)

In 'Ich atmet' einen linden Duft', the singer joins in quickly after a gentle ripple of harp, celesta and clarinet over a held



Alice Coote is enraptured by the genius displayed in Mahler's Rückert-Lieder

note on the horn. It's a song that, unusually, describes a smell – the perfume of lime trees. 'It's a fiendishly difficult song because, when you're singing with the orchestra and they're doing their job properly, there's only the merest thread of strings, running up and down in quavers. It's just genius! Mahler is not setting a poem, rather he's *living* a poem, creating a reality in music, in sound. The harp is part of the scent, which touches underneath your nose and joins the oxygen in the room. Then suddenly the thread of that fragrance, or whatever it is, becomes an amazing quaver line and the vocal line duets above it. The strings are the memory, they are the feeling, the reminiscence.' And, I point out, there's a constant change of time signature. 'He's always shifting things, and each time you think you've landed it rushes off again, but of course a fragrance *doesn't* land. The imagery that went into Mahler's guts when he read the poem just *becomes* the song, a completely new reality. It's magical.'

'Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder' finds the poet/composer in the act of creation. 'I like doing this second because he's still got those quavers running on in the cellos and clarinet. This is another activity that never stops – his mind in the act of



The historical view

Gustav Mahler

As recorded by composer Anton von Webern (1883-1945) in his diary, February 3, 1905

'After *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* I could not compose anything but Rückert – this is lyric poetry from the source; all else is lyric poetry of a derivative sort.'

Pierre Boulez

New York Review of Books, October 28, 1976

'The reckless extension of time, the surplus of instruments, the supercharged feelings and gestures...form had to break down under these excesses! What could be the value of music in which the relation of idea to form is lost in the swamps of expressivity?'

Roger Vignoles

Hyperion booklet-note, 2004


'In these songs [Mahler] has finally abandoned the stock characters of the *Wunderhorn*, with their generalised emotional expression, for a poetic world that could express his own feelings with uncanny accuracy and sensitivity.'

creation, but he's also talking about the bees working to create the honey. It's so witty – it really is! Technically it's more like a speaking song, like being an actor. You should have your voice lined up so those intervals feel easy, like speaking. The interest is in the orchestra – the brewing of those creative ideas.'

The central song in Coote's cycle is 'Liebst du um Schönheit', in many ways the most traditional of the five – a strophic setting and a love song. 'It's strophic in that it's got sections that repeat, but there's no other song like it. Also, it's a very fragile idea – Mahler throws out a thought and you develop it. The vocal line is on its own – it's disjointed and doesn't really have a melody. I find it the most difficult because it's so simple.' What does the *Innig* marking at the start contribute? Is it a mental attitude, or a way of projecting? 'It's *everything* – it's about the way you breathe in, what you're thinking, the colour, the way you place the first consonant, the relationship of the breath to the voice, how you sustain the sound, how you link that sound to the next note, how you choose to be quiet. It shouldn't really be planned. All you need to do is read the poem, listen to the introduction and you know what it means.'

'Mahler seems to know, like no one else, how to utilise the "air space" so that it resonates as another instrument'

Coote places 'Um Mitternacht' fourth and it's the darkest song, scored for winds, brass, harp and piano, with no strings at all. 'It's the most sparse, orchestrally – until the last page when all the brass return from their tea break! And the score looks empty. You feel that emptiness and that sense of being on your own: the vocal line is utterly alone. That opening phrase is right in the crack of your voice – it's in a dark place between the certainty of the lower voice and the head voice. You mustn't sing it in a chest voice. You are in the crack between day and night, the crack between knowing and not knowing, between life and death, and from then on Mahler keeps on with those long, sustained lines that just ask, "What's going on? Help!". And when you sing the words "Um Mitternacht", it nearly always returns to those low opening notes. Mahler often goes down there for very direct, very truthful emotions.' And what happens when she reaches the word 'entscheiden', spread over 14 notes? 'It's like a real scream to me. When I'm singing it, it feels like there's something "animal" there. Mahler doesn't just do one fall, he is desperate enough to add another one.'

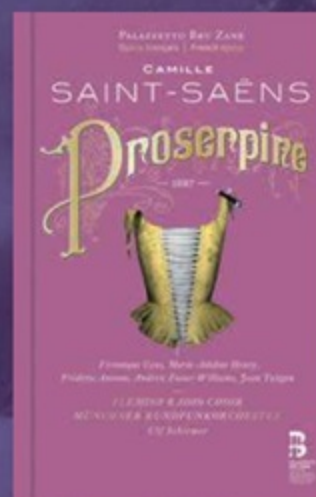
Coote's desire for 'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen' to be placed last stems from the fact she couldn't get to the end, emotionally, singing 'I'm dead to the world', then re-enter the world with another song. The opening, too, is pure genius with first two notes, then three, then four, before the whole phrase unfurls. 'Yeesss! It's like with the symphonies: the sound world Mahler creates is a painterly thing. I really can't think of anyone else who sets up that same kind of emotional and psychological mood. And you just glide into it. It's very fluid, you almost don't notice the bar lines. He seems to know, like no one else, how to utilise the "air space", the space around the instruments, so that it almost seems to resonate as another instrument. I think that's why there are actually fewer instruments playing than you think you are hearing. It's pure magic!' 

► Read our review of Alice Coote's recording of Mahler on page 74

PALAZZETTO BRU ZANE

SERIES OF CD-BOOKS
'FRENCH OPERA'

Proserpine (1887) Camille Saint-Saëns



Flemish Radio Choir
Münchner Rundfunkorchester
Ulf Schirmer *conductor*

with Véronique Gens,
Marie-Adeline Henry, Frédéric Antoun,
Andrew Foster-Williams,
Jean Teitgen

*Proserpine is night,
the night that is fairer
than day.*

Camille Saint-Saëns



PALAZZETTO
BRU ZANE
CENTRE
DE MUSIQUE
ROMANTIQUE
FRANÇAISE

f t YouTube i
BRU-ZANE.COM

Chamber



Andrew Mellor gets to grips with the music of Anders Eliasson: *'He creates music of high concentration from limited material, a trope in Scandinavian music if ever there was one'* ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 51**



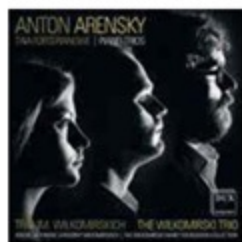
Lindsay Kemp enjoys trio sonatas for oboes and bassoon by Zelenka: *'These performances tumble through the music with a warming sense of relaxed enjoyment'* ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 54**

Arensky

Piano Trios - No 1, Op 32; No 2, Op 73

The Wilkomirski Trio

Dux Ⓢ DUX1320 (66' • DDD)



The Wilkomirski Trio are endorsed by the Wilkomirski Family Foundation, whose

mission is to continue the artistic legacy of a distinguished 20th-century Polish musical dynasty. And although no members of this young Polish ensemble are related to the family, they play with a definite feeling for tradition. The string players use wide, lush vibrato and unselfconscious portamentos; pianist Łukasz Trepczyński dispatches great cascades of notes in the grand manner. These performances of Arensky's two piano trios are spacious, committed and played as if these artists mean what they're saying.

And make no mistake: Arensky doesn't get more compelling than the D minor First Trio – a brooding masterpiece written as an elegy for the great cellist Karl Davidoff. The Wilkomirskis approach it with ardour, tempered by a touching reticence: details such as violinist Celina Kotz's little hesitations over the semiquavers in the opening theme or the inwardness they find in the final pages of the fourth movement throw a potent air of melancholy over their whole account. In the less familiar but still rewarding F minor Second Trio they capture the music's shifting moods with verve, bringing a vivid sense of character to the long final set of variations.

But there's strong competition in this repertoire, and the tinny, slightly recessed recorded sound of the piano, combined with Kotz's occasional severity of tone in louder passages, might send some listeners instead to the relative finesse of the Leonore Trio on Hyperion. Hyperion's recorded sound is clearer, and in the scherzos – two of Arensky's most sparkling inspirations – the Leonores find a lightness and swing that eludes their Polish rivals.

But there's still much to enjoy here – and more than one way to skin a cat.

Richard Bratby

Selected comparison – coupled as above:

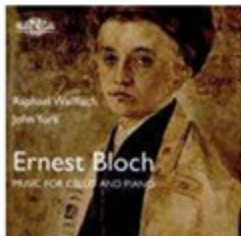
Leonore Pf Trio (4/14) (HYPE) CDA68015

Bloch

Cello Sonata. Suite. Nigun (arr Joseph Schuster). From Jewish Life. Méditation hébraïque

Raphael Wallfisch vc John York pf

Nimbus Ⓢ NI5943 (70' • DDD)



Can it really be that the Ernest Bloch who wrote the Cello Sonata

(1897) is the same composer who penned the Viola Suite 22 years later that Gábor Rejtő and Adolph Baller transcribed for cello and piano and that Raphael Wallfisch and John York feature on the current collection? The Sonata at times sounds like a cross between Saint-Saëns and Dvořák, its appealing melodic content lacking the individual slant that marked so many of Bloch's later works as distinctive. My fondest past memory of the Suite, a wonderful work, is the RCA Victor/HMV shellac set that viola player William Primrose and Fritz Kitzinger made of the original in 1938, a performance of a searing intensity that Wallfisch and York don't quite level up to, though there's plenty to enjoy: the energetic start of the second movement, for example, and the deeply mysterious *Lento* third movement.

'Nigun' from *Baal Shem* (1923) is by far the best-known piece included here, its arranger Joseph Schuster a wonderful cellist in his own right. Wallfisch captures the work's signature 'speaking' eloquence with some effective chordal work and well-calculated expressive leaps. *From Jewish Life* (1925) again takes me back, specifically the opening 'Prayer' which years ago was recorded by Gregor Piatigorsky to wonderful effect, the 'Jewish Song' possibly the most ethnically infused of all the Jewish

works included on the disc, its cantorial cadences unmistakably stemming from synagogue chant. The closing *Méditation hébraïque* (1924, written for Casals) is similarly intense.

Wallfisch and York do well by this music, Wallfisch never pushing for maximum intensity but favouring a lightly inflected manner that suggests an appropriate sense of improvisation. Altogether a most successful programme. **Rob Cowan**

Brahms

String Quintets - No 1, Op 88; No 2, Op 111

WDR Symphony Orchestra

Cologne Chamber Players

Pentatone Ⓢ PTC5186 663 (59' • DDD/DSD)



In their overarching feeling of balance and proportion, these interpretations by the

WDR Symphony Orchestra Chamber Players remind me of the Boston Symphony Orchestra Chamber Players' 1982 Nonesuch recording – still my preferred account of the two Brahms string quintets. Perhaps it's a coincidence that both ensembles are drawn from an orchestral body and lack the febrile tonal quality of full-time chamber groups such as the Takács Quartet (with Lawrence Power for Hyperion), the Hagen Quartet (with Gerard Caussé for DG) or the Nash Ensemble (Onyx).

But whatever the WDR Chamber Players' tone may lack in grit is made up for in warmth and clarity. Listen, for example, at 5'37" in the first movement of the F major First Quintet, where the WDR musicians play with generous legato yet dig into the phrases in a way that draws one just as effectively into the music's rich texture. And as the movement unfolds, they maintain tension while holding fast to the basic tempo. The central *Grave ed appassionato* is unusually introspective, convincingly trading full-throated threnody for delicate wistfulness.



'Captivating': Sara Trickey and Daniel Tong record Fauré and David Matthews for Deux-Elles – see review on page 51

Indeed, the only real disappointment is in the opening movement of the G major Second Quintet, where the WDR seem to be striving for orchestral richness and heft but sound dogged and earthbound, particularly when heard alongside the Bostonians' soaring, ecstatic account. Happily, the remainder of Op 111 is a delight, with the WDR players finding a happy balance between emotional urgency and lyrical fluidity. I especially liked the element of Haydnesque earthiness they lend to the finale. Pentatone's recording is flatteringly sonorous and engagingly detailed. **Andrew Farach-Colton**

Selected comparison:

Boston SO Chbr Phyls (NONE) 7559 79068-2

Chaminade

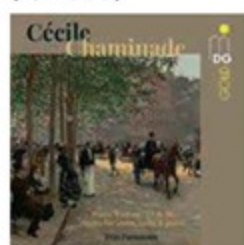
Piano Trios – No 1, Op 11; No 2, Op 34.

Capriccio, Op 18. Trois Morceaux, Op 31.

Romanza appassionata. Sommeil d'enfant

Trio Parnassus

Dabringhaus und Grimm © MDG303 2002-2 (73' • DDD)



So far as I can see, this is only the second time that both of Chaminade's piano

trios have appeared together on the same disc. You might have missed them on the small dB Productions label and, as that disc lasts just 47 minutes and the performances lack the suave polish of the Trio Parnassus, this newcomer is really your only option. Even without that lack of choice, I would strongly recommend it.

The Trio Parnassus has been winning awards and critical acclaim since it was founded in 1983 by cellist Michael Gross. But let's be clear. The trio has had numerous changes of personnel, the only constant being Gross himself. This recording is the first made with violinist Julia Galić and pianist Johann Blanchard. The latter is as close as anyone I know to being a Chaminade specialist (Harriet Smith gave a welcome to his solo Chaminade recital in July 2015) and here shows himself to be a chamber musician of real distinction. The three sound as though they have been together for decades while retaining their freshness and character.

Chaminade may not have the distinctive voice of Mendelssohn or Schumann, and she may lack the originality of Brahms or Fauré (these are the four composers who seem to be her models), but there is more than enough in the elegant, well-crafted pages of her piano trios to convince you

of their merit. Dip into the scherzo third movement (*Presto leggiero*) of the four-movement First Trio (1880) or the expressive *cantabile* of the second movement of the Second Trio (1886) and it is hard to see why they are so little known. Elsewhere, Chaminade's fecundity produced uneven results. For example, only one of the *Trois Morceaux* for violin and piano is truly memorable – but then turn to the Capriccio, Op 18 (which might have been penned by Fritz Kreisler), and, if you have a sweet tooth, the lovely *Romanza appassionata* (Chaminade's own arrangement for cello and piano), and only the most hair-shirted of music lovers could fail to be charmed. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Delius • Elgar

Delius String Quartet (with alternative versions of first two movts) **Elgar String Quartet**

Villiers Quartet

Naxos © 8 573586 (71' • DDD)



Although it was well received at its November 1916 world premiere in London, Delius's String Quartet was promptly revised by the composer, who

PENTATONE

Baroque Tunes From Venice

A new release with Ann Hallenberg,
Il pomo d'oro, and Stefano Montanari



"It's often something unexpected that sparks inspiration for a new album project. This recording started with those cheap CDs you can buy at any gas-station: "Greatest Hits 1985", "Summer Hits 2010" etc. I began to imagine what an album from the 18th century would have been like. What would the "hits" of the season have been?"

— Ann Hallenberg

AVAILABLE ON SACD, STREAMING, AND DOWNLOAD ON

www.pentatonemusic.com

iTunes MUSIC amazon HDtracks primephonic TIDAL HOEZER

Spotify

And in all good record shops

Distributed
in the UK by RSK



LET'S DISCOVER THE MOST FANTASTIC
FRENCH SUMMER FESTIVAL OF CLASSICAL MUSIC !

WITH SIR JOHN ELIOT GARDINER, SIR ROGER NORRINGTON,
FRANÇOIS-XAVIER ROTH, TABEA ZIMMERMANN, NICHOLAS COLLON,
ROBERT KING, DOUGLAS BOYD, NICOLAS CHALVIN, HERVÉ NIQUET...

A lot of masterpieces of Berlioz as
Damnation of Faust, *Les Nuits d'été*, *Irish Melodies*,
The Shakespearean concert, *Symphonie fantastique*,
Harold en Italie...

And also *Water Music* and *Fireworks Music* (Handel),
The Rite of Spring (Stravinsky), *Enigma Variations* (Elgar),
Symphony No. 3 "Scottish" (Mendelssohn), *Shéhérazade* (Ravel),
An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise (Maxwell Davies)...

...AND MANY OTHER SURPRISES,
FOR A UNIQUE SYMPHONIC EXPERIENCE !

WWW.FESTIVALBERLIOZ.COM

Classics + Direct

Gramophone Choice Recordings

Disc of the month

Brahms	Violin Concerto, Sonata No.1	Vadim Gluzman	£11.00
Fauré	Complete Songs Vol.2	Martineau	£11.50
Handel	Water Music	Cummings	£12.50
Leclair	Violin Concertos Op.7 Nos.1, 3, 4 & 5	Biondi	£12.00
Lully	Armide (2CD)	Les Talens Lyriques, Rousset	£17.50
Machaut	Sovereign Beauty	The Orlando Consort	£10.50
Monteverdi	# The Other Vespers	I Fagiolini	£11.00
Rachmaninov	The Edison Recordings April 1919	Rachmaninov	£ 6.00
Stanford	Choral Music	Trinity, Layton	£10.50
Verdi	Un ballo in Maschera (DVD)	ROH, Abbado	£12.00
	Bach-Busoni, Chopin, Franck	Alberto Reyes	£ 9.50
	Visions	Véronique Gens	£11.50

Recent Recommended Releases

Bach J S	Secular Cantatas VIII 'Celebratory'	Suzuki	£10.50
Beethoven	Complete Symphonies (5CD)	Blomstedt	£40.00
Dvořák	+ Suk Piano Quartets	Josef Suk Piano Quartet	£11.50
Haydn	String Quartets Op.20 Nos.4-6	Chiaroscuro Qt	£10.50
Reger	Clarinet Sonatas	Collins, McHale	£11.00
Schubert	Songs Vol.3	Bostridge, Drake	£ 8.20
Shostakovich	+ Martinů Cello Concertos	Poltéra, Varga	£11.00
Tchaikovsky	Complete Ballets (5SACD)	Bergen PO, N. Järvi	£35.00
Verdi	Macbeth (DVD)	Domingo, Semenchuk, Conlon	£11.00
Walton	Violin Concerto, Partita	Marwood, Brabbins	£10.50
	Solo DG Recordings (39CD)	Daniel Barenboim	£84.00

Free Monthly New Release & Special Offer Listings

We accept payment by Cheque / Visa / MasterCard

Postal Charges UK - First item £1.50, then £0.50 per item Box Sets £3.00
Maximum UK postage charge = £3.00

Europe - First CD £2.00, then £1.00 per disc Box Sets from £2.50

Outside Europe at cost Prices valid until 30.08.17 and include VAT at 20%

Office Hours Monday - Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm Answerphone on Wednesdays

Orders: 01787 882223 Classics Direct

91 North Street, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 1RF, UK E-mail: sales@classicsdirect.co.uk

www.classicsdirect.co.uk to view our special offer listings

added a scherzo to its original three-movement scheme. Now the musicologist Daniel Grimley has fashioned performing versions of the opening *Allegro moderato* and slow movement (subtitled 'Late Swallows') in their initial guise. The latter is especially fascinating, its outer sections containing wholly different material, and whose poignant central portion here harks back more strongly than ever to that utterly magical episode at the heart of Delius's exquisite 1908 tone poem *In a Summer Garden*. Ripely captured by the microphones, the Villiers Quartet are on dedicated form and their reading of the work as we know it today is likewise a laudable one, if without quite the recreative spark, immaculate coordination and sheer authority of those distinguished versions from the Fitzwilliam Quartet (originally made for Decca L'Oiseau-Lyre and reissued on Australian Eloquence) or the Britten Quartet (Warner British Composers).

There's tough competition, too, in the Elgar, not least from the Goldner Quartet, whose gloriously trenchant and sublimely assured performance on Hyperion was my own personal 'Critics' Choice' for 2011. Tension levels on this likeable newcomer aren't always as high as they might be (the Australian ensemble's giddily combustible ardour in the finale thrills to the marrow every time), and I'm not sure these players manage to extract every ounce of expressive fibre or wistful poetry from the elusive *Andante piacevole* centrepiece. Ultimately, I do crave greater passion and pain in this music than the undoubtedly watchful Villiers choose to find. Still, if you fancy the coupling, there's no real need to hold back; and of course for Delius diehards (and I include myself among them!) the disc will be essential listening for the two extra completions alone. **Andrew Achenbach**

Delius – selected comparisons:

Fitzwilliam Qt (1/81st) (ELOQ) ELQ442 9486

Britten Qt (4/97th) (EMI/WARN) 095405-2

Elgar – selected comparison:

Goldner Qt (10/11) (HYPE) CDA67857

Eliasson

Fogliame. Notturmo. Senza risposte. Trio

Norrbotnen NEO

BIS (F) BIS2270 (68' • DDD/DSD)



Like his geographical neighbour Per Nørgård, Anders Eliasson hit upon a harmonic formula early in his career that freed him to create music of high

concentration from limited material, a trope in Scandinavian music if ever there was one. Again, that process of self-discipline induced music that can be rampantly imaginative while remaining taut and discernible.

Without studying these works in detail, my ears tell me something of that formula is at play in three of the four single-movement works here. *Notturmo* for bass clarinet, cello and piano frustrates and trolls its own sense of lyricism. 'Something of the night' comes, perhaps, as the bass clarinet insists on playing high up where its tone is more mellow than that of a standard clarinet, and also given the music's inability to render the material clearly even if the musical process is impeccably clear.

That sense of lyricism is more unfettered in *Senza risposte*, perhaps a busy, urban vision of a woodland idyll for flute, violin, cello and piano. The extensive *Fogliame* for piano quartet is a wondrous piece: a river of music whose opening throbbing feels ever-present even when it's not sounding (echoes of Sibelius's Seventh) and with plenty of long-form counterpoint that tells you this composer means business.

There's a different form of tonality at work in *Trio*, where it's not just the vibraphone (added to violin and piano) that suggests an émigré from a northern jazz bar but also added notes and a certain blowy wistfulness. I am not so convinced, and despite the interlocking patterns that eventually emerge, the lack of organic process is disappointing after what we've already heard. That's of little consequence given the ensnaring qualities elsewhere. Excellent performances from the new music ensemble of the Norrbotten Chamber Orchestra – musicians, notably the hypersensitive strings, who are listening deeply. **Andrew Mellor**

Fauré • D Matthews

'Romanza'

Fauré Violin Sonata, Op 13. Romance, Op 28

D Matthews Adonis, Op 105. Aria, Op 41.

Romanza, Op 119a

Sara Trickey *vn* **Daniel Tong** *pf*

Deux-Elles (F) DXL1172 (68' • DDD)



On the face of it, Fauré might not seem like the most obvious of pairings for the music of David Matthews, but apparently he's Matthews's own choice. 'The pursuit of beauty in his music is something that strongly attracts me', he writes in the booklet notes for this captivating recital,

and when you hear the opening bars of the first piece recorded here, Matthews's 2007 sonatina-by-any-other-name *Adonis*, it all makes perfect sense. The opening invocation for piano (representing Adonis), its response from the violin (a seductive Venus), and the way the music immediately blossoms into a lilting melody: we're not far here from the world of Szymanowski's *Mythes*. Matthews has a gift for drawing new beauties from traditional mediums and the ending of this graceful three-movement work, when he finally uncovers the Welsh folk song upon which the whole piece is based, is magical in its simplicity.

Matthews composed the piece for Sara Trickey, and there's no reason why this performance shouldn't be considered definitive. Trickey and Daniel Tong really have the measure of Matthews's musical language, finding an improvisatory quality in the Aria of 1986 and bringing an understated wit to the Romanza (2012) – written to prove that contemporary music can still say something meaningful in waltz time. These are natural, unforced performances, recorded in a clear acoustic that nicely captures the gleam of Trickey's sound. In a crowded field, their account of Fauré's A major Sonata holds up well enough too; there's a to-and-fro between the pair and an engaging intimacy in the way Trickey's lines are buoyed up by Tong's marginally more assertive playing. But you'll buy this for the David Matthews, and you'll be glad you did.

Richard Bratby

Fuchs

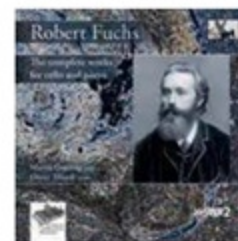
'The Complete Works for Cello and Piano'

Cello Sonatas - Op 29; Op 83.

Seven Fantasy Pieces, Op 78

Martin Ostertag *vc* **Oliver Triendl** *pf*

TYXart (F) TXA16078 (76' • DDD)



It's always nice to receive a new disc of music by Robert Fuchs, the Austrian symphonist who taught a regular who's who of Viennese late Romantics. Mahler, Schreker, Wolf, Enescu, Korngold, even at one point Sibelius – they all passed through Fuchs's class, with the result that, like Glazunov or Stanford, he's become one of those hugely influential teachers whose own music, while not exactly neglected, is nonetheless sometimes treated as a bit of a footnote.

And my first reaction to this disc of his complete music for cello and piano was how much like Brahms it sounds (Fuchs

even had the beard to match). But listen on, and something more distinctive emerges: a certain lightness and sparkle to the piano-writing and a harmonic vocabulary that's ideally suited to taking a folk-like melody and throwing an ominous shadow behind it. Moments in the *Fantasy Pieces* evoke Mahler's Wunderhorn settings, and the long melodies of the Op 29 D minor Cello Sonata's first movement unfold in big, Brucknerian paragraphs.

Martin Ostertag and Oliver Triendl capture the symphonic potential of that movement nicely – its sunset coda as well as its craggy climaxes – and give an unforced lilt to the themes of the Op 83 E flat minor Sonata. Ostertag could perhaps have characterised his melodies with a little more flair, and his tone, while mellow in the lower register, can feel a little underpowered at the top. Overall, the pair are sympathetic and stylish champions of Fuchs's music, and though Ivan Drobinsky on Marco Polo finds more drama, TYXart's warm and realistic chamber acoustic may give this disc the edge for some. But if you're new to Fuchs, either is worth hearing. **Richard Bratby**

Selected comparison – coupled as above:

Drobinsky, Blumenthal (11/93) (MARC) D 8 223423

Furtwängler

Piano Quintet

Clarens Quintet

Tacet © TACET B119

(80' • 24-bit/96kHz 5.1 & stereo)

From TACET119



Furtwängler's father was an archaeologist who assisted Heinrich Schliemann in the uncovering (some would say imaginative reconstruction) of the temples at Olympia. During stretches of his Piano Quintet, I was cast back to a strange vision of university days, sitting in a lecture theatre while Schliemann's unearthly form mumbled his way through a slide-show of excavation reports, shards of clay and stone. 'Of ritual significance' was the term often applied (and now equally derided) when historical methods fell short.

And when the ghosts of Beethoven and Brahms and Bruckner emerge from the gloaming of the Piano Quintet, what might be their significance? The finale redevelops the First 'Razumovsky' Quartet's opening theme; in turn, the chromatic arch of the *Adagio* bears a more passing resemblance to Beethoven's 'thème russe' from the same Quartet. 'I am a tragic writer!' responded

Furtwängler to one of the Quintet's early private listeners, and its subtext is plain. The why, the need for the work's existence, remains elusive. After making initial sketches in 1912, he took another 23 years to complete it: the wonder is that its three sprawling movements hang together as much as they do.

First released on CD in 2004, the present recording is reissued on a Blu-ray disc of three audio formats. At a friend's house I sampled Tacet's proprietary technology of 'Moving Real Surround Sound'. The effect is every bit as unsettling as the eyes of Vernon Ward's ducks, following Pete and Dud around the gallery; back at home I found that the 2.0 stereo is already distinguished by an unusual depth of field.

The performance itself is no less distinctive: at over 80 minutes, it is almost a third as long again as a rival recording from the Sine Nomine ensemble on Timpani. Enough already, you might think, when the piece is so incurably prolix. However, Furtwängler the composer is not to be rushed. Furtwängler the conductor understood better than most how a slower tempo may breathe spontaneous life into the narrative complex of a Beethoven *allegro*; so, it appears, do the Clarens Quintet. Recommended with caution to keepers of the Furtwängler flame, and to those who are martyrs to their hi-fi. **Peter Quantrill**

Comparative version:

Sine Nomine Qt (TIMP) 3C1092

Holst

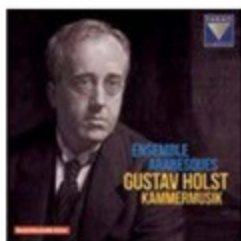
Quintet for Piano and Winds, Op 3.

Three Pieces for Oboe and String Quartet.

Terzetto. Wind Quintet, Op 14. Sextet

Ensemble Arabesques

Farao © B108098 (80' • DDD)



'Whatever his hand found to do he did it with his might', wrote Vaughan Williams of

his friend Gustav Holst, and this disc collecting all Holst's chamber music for woodwinds (which is to say, practically all his chamber music) shows exactly what he meant. It's not that everything here is entirely typical. There's a Schumannesque quality about the student piano-and-wind Quintet of 1896, and naughty hints of Richard Strauss and the French school in the contemporaneous E minor Sextet (its first recording, though the disc doesn't say so). In the Three Pieces for oboe and strings (recomposed in 1910) and the reasonably familiar Wind Quintet (1903, though Holst later disowned it) a

recognisable voice emerges. And with the polytonal Terzetto of 1925 (performed here with clarinet instead of viola, an option Holst authorised) he's in full, visionary flight. These two exquisite movements could almost be offcuts from *Sāvitri*.

But everything here has an unmistakable assurance: a composer entirely confident in whatever voice he chose to speak. And that's what comes across in these delightfully fresh and characterful performances from the Hamburg-based Ensemble Arabesques. A photo in the booklet shows them recording standing up, which might account for the sheer immediacy of their playing. The acoustic gives them as much space as they need, and these artists are clearly all on the same page, leaning into the music with a bright-eyed enthusiasm that doesn't preclude either a sense of mystery in the Terzetto or an unforced instinct for the music's poetry: the way they let the *Adagio* of the Wind Quintet sink imperceptibly into slumber is particularly lovely. It's a joy, too, to hear works usually dismissed as juvenilia really played rather than patronised, and I found myself returning to this disc with increasing pleasure. **Richard Bratby**

Kreisler

'Hommage à Fritz Kreisler'

Balogh Dirge of the North (arr Kreisler) Dvořák Humoreske, Op 101 No 7. Indian Lament.

Slavonic Dance No 2 (all arr Kreisler) Heuberger Der Opernball – Midnight Bells (arr Kreisler)

Kreisler Allegretto (in the style of Boccherini).

Caprice viennois, Op 2. Chanson Louis XIII et Pavane (in the style of Louis Couperin).

La gitana. Gypsy Caprice. Liebesfreud.

Liebesleid. Marche-miniature viennoise.

Praeludium und Allegro (in the style of Pugnani). Recitativo und Scherzo-Caprice, Op 6.

Rondino on a Theme of Beethoven. Schön

Rosmarin. Syncopation. Tambourin chinois,

Op 3. Toy Soldier's March Tchaikovsky Andante cantabile, Op 11 (arr Kreisler)

Barnabás Kelemen vs Zoltán Kocsis pf

Budapest Music Center © BMCCD250 (75' • DDD)



I thought during the first track, *Tambourin chinois*, that I was in for

another efficient and charmless collection of Kreisler miniatures. Kelemen is placed well forward and slightly too separated from Kocsis for my taste; his tone, with its narrow vibrato and steely edge, is intense and insistent; the Chinese element of the piece is played in such a way you expect



'Delicious morceaux': Barnabás Kelemen and the late Zoltán Kocsis turn on the charm in their homage to Fritz Kreisler

Aladdin and Widow Twanky to make an appearance at any moment. But in fact the disc contains, with a few other exceptions, some really superb versions of these delicious morceaux, some of which have received very few recordings. Among these is Kreisler's transcription of *Dirge of the North* by his friend Ernő Balogh, the only other recording of which, so far as I know, is Kreisler's own 1924 version.

Kocsis, who recorded this programme less than two months before his death last November, had been ill for some time from the cancer that killed him. For much of the time here he remains a background figure – not just in the sound picture but musically somewhat disengaged. Yet, ironically, it is in some of the more extrovert numbers that he makes the strongest impression, and he and Kelemen offer tremendously buoyant, debonair accounts of the *Marche-miniature viennoise*, *Toy Soldier's March*, *Schön Rosmarin*, *Syncopation* and (the final track) *Praeludium und Allegro* (though the *Praeludium* would have benefited from a more robust piano support).

Kelemen shows that he can turn on the charm when he wants (there are lovely performances of the Tchaikovsky-Kreisler

Andante cantabile from the Quartet in D and the Heuberger-Kreisler 'Midnight Bells' from *Der Opernball*) but one thing, sadly, counts against him throughout: his stentorian intakes of breath. Not good for repeated listening. But that is not the only reason why once again, while I can happily listen to an hour or more of Kreisler playing this repertoire, I have to have an interval when it's played by almost anyone else. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Lindroth

'in our time...'

Para dos violines^a. *Des Menschen Wort vergeht*^b.

Rite Now^c. *SXQ II*^d. *Night Music*^e

^aChristina Högman *sop* ^aBo Pettersson *bcl*

^aBjörn Malmqvist *db* ^aCecilia & Martin Gelland,

^bNils-Erik Sparf *vns* Mats Jansson ^bharmonium/^apf

^cYoriko Asahara *harmonium* ^dStockholm

Saxophone Quartet; ^eMusicians from the Royal

College of Music, Stockholm ^eDavid Swärd *cond*

Sterling Modern © CDM3003-2 (62' • DDD • T/t)



A one-time pupil of Sven-David Sandström, the Swedish composer

Peter Lindroth is now in his late sixties. This portrait CD of his instrumental and chamber works, mostly written between 2013 and 2016, is a useful way inside an aesthetic where the more intimate and stripped-back the setting, the more powerfully Lindroth's work is able to communicate.

Rite Now, an earlier work from 1991, loosens me off completely. Lindroth explains that the piece he had originally planned to write for string trio and electronics was changed by 'an ongoing war' (presumably the Gulf War) and the piece that emerged instead was 'rather nasty'. And, it has to be said, rather simplistic too, as a reverby processed military drumbeat collides with angsty string clusters, an overcooked texture that sustains itself for a whole nine minutes.

Twenty-five years later, though, Lindroth has developed a more measured and allusive voice. *Para dos violines* (2014-15) is a set of five miniatures for violin duo, handled with exquisite deportment by Duo Gelland, that all rotate around a harmonic centre which is never explicitly stated. *Des Menschen Wort vergeht* (2013) sets a 1934 poem by the German poet Karl Wolfskehl about

abuses of language, apt in this age of fake news. Soprano Christina Högman makes rather heavy weather of Lindroth's melodic contours but without derailing the symbolism of a misremembered folk music – language perched on a perpetually slippery slope towards composerly reinterpretation. *SXQ II* for saxophone quartet (2014) – the motion of dovetailing harmonic chorales cracks near the end to be replaced by free-jazz violence – and the harmonically lithe *Night Music* (2016) for harmonium, piano, bass and bass clarinet round off this worthwhile release, with its occasional frustrations.

Philip Clark

Messiaen · Krakauer · Socalled

'Akoka: Reframing Olivier Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time'

Krakauer Akoka Messiaen Quatuor pour la fin du temps Socalled Meanwhile...

David Krakauer *cl* Jonathan Crow *vn* Matt Haimovitz *vc* Geoffrey Burleson *pf* Socalled *elects* Pentatone (P) ACC24319 560 (64' • DDD)



If the title and indeed often unearthly content of Messiaen's best-known chamber work can lead us to listen to it in refined but also abstracted terms, this 'reframing' places the *Quartet for the End of Time* in the context of its disputed origins, in wartime France and Poland. You can read all about them in Rebecca Rischin's history *For the End of Time* (Cornell: 2003, usefully paraphrased in her booklet-notes) but this isn't just the CD of the book.

The album title honours one of the quartet's original performers in Stalag VIII-A, the clarinetist Henri Akoka. Through the violinist Étienne Pasquier, Messiaen met Akoka in Verdun, and began composing what became the third-movement 'Abîme des oiseaux' before they were captured and deported together. David Krakauer has composed a wild, keening improvisation, klezmer on crack, crunching Akoka's Algerian-Jewish heritage with fragments of the Quartet to come.

Bearing in mind this background – Rischin's research into Akoka's particular, metallic tone-quality, for example – the Quartet itself is played and heard afresh. There's no mistaking the Jewish inflection of Krakauer's solo, but a rhythmic freedom more subtly inflects the opening 'Liturgie du cristal' and the two 'Louange' movements. The effect is often less

monumental, more spontaneous than usual, though the unison sixth movement is as rhythmically tight and implacable as one could wish.

The recording itself, too, is very thoughtfully done: the piano is not placed a few feet back as is common, and Geoffrey Burleson's sensitivity to his colleagues is all the more impressive for being exposed to close scrutiny, though his rhythmic shading in the final 'Louange' rather comes and goes. Of the sampled electroacoustic epilogue, the less said the better. The Messiaen performance puts a human face on a disparate body. I hear the piece a little differently now, and love it a little more, and what more can a recording do? Peter Quantrill

Zelenka

Six Sonatas, ZWV181

Collegium 1704 / Václav Luks *hpd* Accent (P) ACC24319 (107' • DDD)



Zelenka's six long and luxurious trio sonatas for oboes, bassoon and

continuo were first brought into modern-day light in the 1970s by the hot line-up of Heinz Holliger, Maurice Bourgue and Klaus Thunemann (Archiv, 10/74), since when there have been period versions of all six from Paul Dombrecht, Marcel Ponseele and Danny Bond (Accent, 3/89) and Ensemble Zefiro's Alfredo Bernardini and Paolo and Alberto Grazi (Auvidis, 6/94 and 2/96) – period reed stars all round.

This new recording from the Prague-based Collegium 1704 features Xenia Löffler and Michael Posch, oboists probably best known as members of the Akademie für Alte Musik (for whom Löffler's solos have so often been a shining light), and with bassoon companion Jane Gower they give flowing performances of pieces that in their extent, intricacy and near-constant blowing must surely test the breath and lips of even the best. Not that you are aware of this too often in these performances, which tumble through the music with a warming sense of relaxed enjoyment. The sound is a soft and deep one with plenty of clarity for the winds, if less for the slightly spongy continuo section consisting of harpsichord, a not greatly audible theorbo and a double bass which – like some old gentleman dancing daintily with his granddaughters – adds an amiable gruffness to the overall picture.

From all the super-Bachian meandering melodic lines, full textures and harmonic side-slips of most of this music, Sonata No 5 stands out for its Vivaldian energy and light; Gower shows impressive rat-a-tat virtuosity here, while the work's stronger formal clarity draws from the group a more vivid response to structure and shape. Violinist Helen Zemanová ably steps in for one of the oboes in Sonata No 3, bringing the sound a new and altered focus. These, then, are pleasant performances, not in your face, but unhurried and full of expertise.

Lindsay Kemp

Mstislav Rostropovich

JS Bach Cantata No 41 – Jesu, nun sei gepreiset^a

Solo Cello Suite No 3, BWV1009

Britten Cello Sonata, Op 65^b

Debussy Cello Sonata^b

Schubert Arpeggione Sonata, D821^b

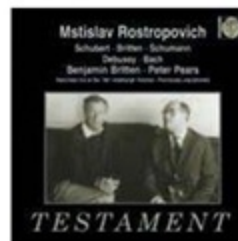
Schumann Fünf Stücke im Volkston, Op 102^b

Mstislav Rostropovich *vc*

^bBenjamin Britten *pf* ^aPeter Pears *ten*

Testament mono (M) SBT2 1517 (111' • ADD)

Recorded live at the Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh, July 7, 1961



As a felicitous appendix to the compendious boxes from DG and

Warner (5/17), this Testament release of Rostropovich in his debut at the Aldeburgh Festival catches the cellist somewhere near his early and all-conquering best. He had never before played the Arpeggione Sonata; in retrospect, his professed nervousness is evident in some snatched bowing and occasionally plain responses to Britten's nuances of touch and articulation. On the other hand, there is a simple, heartfelt beauty, like a love letter written in a foreign language, to the *Adagio* which some listeners (including Tully Potter, who contributes the booklet note) have found absent from the more leisurely 1968 Decca recording.

Rostropovich and Britten also reprised the Schumann and Debussy items in the studio (1/62). The concert setting brought predictable losses of momentary coordination offset by palpable gains: a burning eloquence from Rostropovich in the slower middle movements of the Schumann; an even more puckish wit and irreproducible rubato in the Debussy.

The cellist had evidently devoted more of his exiguous rehearsal time to the



'Luxurious trio sonatas': Collegium 1704 lavish their expertise on Zelenka

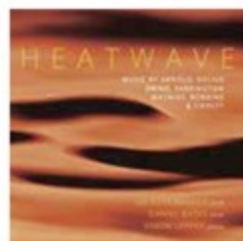
composer's new Cello Sonata. Composed quickly in the wake of Britten's first meeting with both him and Shostakovich in London, the piece sounds more Russian than ever in this, its first performance, from the fearful, muttered opening Dialogue to the fiercely satirical March, which sounds even more like Prokofiev in the first of the recital's encores.

The second of them brings the single new item to Rostropovich's discography, an extended Bach aria with Pears on lugubrious form. Happily the album concludes with more Bach from the cellist's true festival debut four days earlier. In Aldeburgh Parish Church he took a less stately, more relaxed approach to the dances of the C major Suite than in his appearance at the 1955 Prague Spring Festival (Supraphon, A/11) with a gentle and sprightly Bourrée and a bracing, almost garrulous virility to the concluding Gigue. Despite the claim to the contrary in the booklet note, the Suite ends with warm applause. 'I hef been so happy in Aldeburgh that I don't want to go', says Rostropovich in his broken English at the end of the main recital, and it's clear the feeling was mutual.

Peter Quantrill

'Heatwave'

Arnold Suite *bourgeoise* **Delius Intermezzo** (arr Fenby) **Dring Trio** **Farrington Heatwave** **Mathias Divertimento** **Robbins Bagatelle**. *Pastorale* **Tippett King Priam** - Prelude, Recitative and Aria
Juliette Bausor fl Daniel Bates ob Simon Lepper pf
Stone Records © 5060192 780710 (60' • DDD)



The title 'Heatwave' might well conjure rather a different music from that for

flute, oboe and piano, though this disc affords sultriness aplenty. Not least the work of that name (2006) by Iain Farrington, which evokes appropriately hot weather in its incisive and often jazzy outer movements together with, in its central 'Siesta', sensuousness lurking behind the enervation.

The other pieces here range widely across earlier generations of British composers. Delius's *Intermezzo* (1910 – derived from his opera *Fennimore and Gerda*) retains a wistful charm in Eric Fenby's arrangement, and Tippett's own reworking of music from the third act of *King Priam* (1962) equally conveys the

ethereal beauty of this frequently violent opera. Good to see two short-lived composers represented: Geoffrey Robbins concentrated on light music, with *Pastorale* and *Bagatelle* (1948) denoting his keen lyrical gift, while the *Trio* (1968) by Madeleine Dring exemplifies her fastidious idiom in the limpid poise of its *Andante* or the airy elegance in the woodwind 'cadanza' of its finale. The *Divertimento* (1964) by William Mathias enriches its intricate part-writing with especially quick-witted animation and, in its *Andante*, an expressive equivocation underpinned by discreet harmonic dissonance. Finally, *Suite bourgeoise* (1940) finds the still-teenage Malcolm Arnold flexing his stylistic muscles over five pertly contrasted miniatures which anticipate the ironic and suave humour to come.

Music for flute, oboe and piano is unlikely to evince profundity yet can exude a pathos as is found through all the pieces here. Performances and recording are excellent. **Richard Whitehouse**

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

Sir Malcolm Sargent

Half a century after the conductor's death, Andrew Achenbach praises the oft-maligned British musician who supported fellow artists and was capable of great things on the podium

For more than 40 years, no British conductor enjoyed greater celebrity status or was more successful at introducing classical music to the public than Sir Malcolm Sargent (1895–1967). With his immaculate Savile Row attire and white carnation buttonhole, Sargent would customarily whip up such a frenzy of enthusiasm at the Last Night of the Proms that concerns were voiced within the BBC hierarchy. Needless to say, the promenaders adored him, and the Last Night would not be the flag-waving extravaganza it is today without his example. A showman, a workaholic and someone who demanded the highest standards from performers, Sargent could be difficult to deal with. His private life was colourful to say the least: not only did he count royalty among his acquaintances, but he was also a notorious womaniser. Rank-and-file orchestral musicians (who, he once told a newspaper reporter, might become complacent if offered any kind of job security or pension rights) dubbed him ‘Flash Harry’, an epithet which has stuck. Since his death, aged 72, his standing among critics has been largely woeful. Michael Kennedy’s withering assessment from 1997 is not untypical: ‘Sargent was bargain basement. He has perhaps been over-vilified, but one cannot make out a convincing case for drastic rehabilitation. He was a star musical propagandist, not a great conductor.’

To understand that Sargent was indeed capable of great things on the podium one only has to experience his incandescent first complete recording of Elgar’s *The Dream of Gerontius* (with the incomparable Heddle Nash in the title-role), set down in Huddersfield Town Hall in April 1945. Both here and on his 1944 electrifying world premiere recording of Holst’s *The Hymn of Jesus* you’ll hear choral singing of thrilling discipline and fervour – not for nothing did Sir Thomas Beecham observe that ‘he makes the buggers sing like

One wonders just how much more fascinating live material there is lurking in the vaults

the blazes’. Sargent’s unashamedly large-scale performances of Bach’s B minor Mass and *St Matthew Passion*, Handel’s *Messiah* and Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* became regular fixtures in British musical life (he recorded *Messiah* no fewer than four times).

Sargent’s numerous premiere performances of home-grown fare include Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast* and Vaughan Williams’s *Hugh the Drover*, *Sir John in Love*, *Riders to the Sea* and Ninth Symphony. Nor should we forget his lifelong devotion to the Savoy operas of Gilbert and Sullivan (the effervescent ‘Glyndebourne’/EMI *Iolanthe*, recorded in 1958, is a good starting point)

and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s cantata trilogy *The Song of Hiawatha* (from 1928 to 1939, throngs would descend upon the Royal Albert Hall in London for lavishly staged Hiawatha evenings featuring the Royal Choral Society under Sargent’s flamboyant lead). You can hear his affectionate reading of *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast* in a big Icon box from Warner Classics, along with lots more valuable material: Delius’s *Songs of Farewell*; his eloquent 1954 remake of *Gerontius*; Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast*; a memorably unforced *Enigma* Variations and silken *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* with the Philharmonia; Holst’s *The Planets* and *Beni Mora* with the

BBC SO; a watchful, yet deeply felt Beethoven *Eroica* and shapely Schubert *Unfinished* with the RPO; Dohnányi’s adorable Suite in F sharp minor (a Sargent speciality – in addition to the 1961 recording here, there’s a mono recording from 1948 with the LSO); Sibelius Symphonies Nos 1 and 5 plus assorted tone poems (*Pohjola’s Daughter* is especially gripping); and his underrated Walton’s First Symphony with the New Philharmonia Orchestra (overshadowed by the more visceral LSO/Previn version, also recorded in 1966 and released in the same month in 1967).

As a young man, Sargent showed such gifts as a pianist that Benno Moiseiwitsch not only gave him free lessons

DEFINING MOMENTS

• 1921 – *Early breakthrough*

Conducts the Queen’s Hall Orchestra in two performances of his own *Impression on a Windy Day*, first in Leicester and then at the Proms in London, at the invitation of Sir Henry Wood.

• 1924 – *London engagements*

Moves to London. Becomes chief conductor of the Robert Mayer Children’s Concerts and later music director of D’Oyly Carte Opera Company for the 1926, 1927 and 1929 seasons.

• 1932 – *Establishes LPO with Beecham*

Co-founds the LPO with Thomas Beecham, a venture subsidised by Sargent’s wealthy patron Samuel Courtauld (Sargent is music director of the Courtauld–Sargent Concerts from 1929).

• 1950 – *Makes waves at the BBC SO*

Appointed chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, succeeding Adrian Boult (he stays in the post until 1957). That same year’s Proms season breaks all attendance records.

• 1967 – *Final Proms appearance*

Undergoes surgery for pancreatic cancer. Makes a short speech at the Last Night of the Proms (the first conducted by Colin Davis) but dies two weeks later. The Malcolm Sargent Cancer Care for Children (now renamed CLIC Sargent) is set up in his memory.



but also urged him to pursue a solo career. The Odessa-born virtuoso was just one of a host of great artists who benefited from Sargent's conscientious support on disc – Schnabel (in all five Beethoven concertos), Harriet Cohen, Curzon, Lympny, Denis Matthews, Ogdon, Cyril Smith, Heifetz (Bruch, Elgar, Mozart and Vieuxtemps), Oistrakh, Ricci, Sammons, Gioconda de Vito, Primrose, du Pré, Feuermann, Fournier, Rostropovich, Tortelier, Leon Goossens and Ferrier.

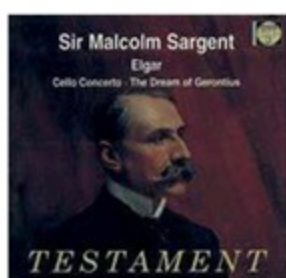
I've enjoyed some nourishing encounters in recent years with previously buried archival gems. There's the 1959 UK premiere of Martinů's *The Epic of Gilgamesh*; a superb Elgar Symphony No 2 from 1964 with the BBC SO in Bristol's Colston Hall; a rather special account

of Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the 1967 Ravinia Festival; a BBC Legends coupling of the fourth symphonies by Sibelius and Vaughan Williams (the latter both shrewdly paced and abundantly musical); and, on a rewarding Lyrita issue, the 1957 European premiere of Walton's Cello Concerto with its dedicatee Gregor Piatigorsky, and Bax's

Violin Concerto with André Gertler. One wonders how much more fascinating live material there is still lurking in the vaults. In 2017, the 50th anniversary of Sargent's death, what better time for a reappraisal of this habitually maligned figure. **G**

A special BBC Prom on July 24 recreates Sargent's 500th Prom from 1966 to mark 50 years since his death

THE ESSENTIAL RECORDING



Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius*
Heddle Nash *ten* Gladys
Ripley *contr* Dennis Noble
bar Norman Walker *bass*
Huddersfield Choral Society;
Liverpool Philharmonic
Orchestra / Malcolm Sargent
Testament mono (6/45, 2/94)

Instrumental



Harriet Smith on Schubert duets from Staier and Melnikov:

'The F minor Fantasy opens with an other-worldly quality that has a rare fragility to it' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 63**



Richard Bratby listens to a debut disc from harpist Elisabeth Plank:

'She has a real command of light and shade; foreground figures glint and sing in a range of shades from brilliant to sombre' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 65**

Beethoven • Hummel • Mozart

'The Enlightenment Influence'

Beethoven Five Pieces, WoO33.

Two Preludes, Op 39. Fugue, WoO31

Hummel Prelude and Fugue, Op posth 7

Nos 1 & 2. Un poco Andante, Op posth 7 No 3.

Fugue, Op posth 7 No 4. Ricercare, Op posth 8

Mozart Adagio and Allegro, K594.

Andante, K616. Fantasia, K608

Iain Quinn *org*

Regent © REGCD476 (79' • DDD)

Played on the organ of Trinity College, Cambridge



Organists devising a chronological programme invariably come unstuck in the period between Bach and Mendelssohn.

The orchestral symphony, the string quartet and the piano sonata may have all been coming into their own but the organ was woefully overlooked. Yet Mozart is credited with having described the organ as the King of Instruments, while Beethoven began his professional musical life as an organist. What happened?

Iain Quinn has gone some way to addressing those missing years in the organ repertory by rooting out pieces by Mozart, Beethoven and Hummel. His carefully researched booklet notes suggest that the void has traditionally been filled by transcriptions, but these are also the mainstay of this programme. Most notable of these are the three musical clock pieces by Mozart – Quinn plays them with understated charm and elegance on the sweet-toned stops of the 1976 Metzler organ of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Five of the Beethoven pieces were also devised for a musical clock. Mercifully Quinn does not include Beethoven's most notorious musical clock piece – *Wellington's Victory* – and instead turns to five inoffensive miniatures which offer up innocuous vignettes of Beethoven trying (but failing) to match the genius of Haydn's musical clock pieces. The two Preludes are

transcribed from piano pieces, leaving only the Fugue as a potential Beethoven original organ piece; Quinn suggests it was written as an examination piece for the position of assistant court organist in Bonn in 1794. If so, it seems the examiners were never expected to hear the piece through to the end – invention fails after just a few bars.

That leaves us with a handful of possibly genuine organ pieces by Hummel. There are grandiose gestures in the Prelude in C minor but the rest is all pretty stodgy stuff, alleviated here only by Quinn's carefully registered, neatly articulated and ideally paced playing.

The disc presents some exquisite playing, a very fine recording and plenty of historical interest, but musically it has nothing to enlighten those organists looking for the missing link between Bach and Mendelssohn. **Marc Rochester**

Debussy • Ravel

Debussy *Images*. L'isle joyeuse

Ravel *Gaspard de la nuit*®. Jeux d'eau. La valse®

Alessandro Taverna *pf*

Somm © SOMMCD0168 (78' • DDD)

®Recorded live at the Turner Sims Concert Hall, Southampton, January 16, 2016



Alessandro Taverna chooses to play up the contrasts between Debussy and Ravel

in this recital, with the latter at his most opulently virtuoso, the former largely in a more inward frame of mind.

The Debussy *Images* are beautifully paced: I particularly like his way with 'Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut', which has a pleasing clarity of voicing and, when the textures warm up (1'36"), he reacts with great delicacy. This is utterly unshowy playing, too, which suits the *Images* well. 'Reflets dans l'eau' is given with luminosity and sensitivity, the textures always considered and well weighted. I find Taverna a little soft-edged in 'Mouvement' and 'Poissons d'or' – just compare him with

Bavouzet – where I wanted the effect to be more glinting, less humane. But his *L'isle joyeuse* is impressive, his technique again utterly in the service of the music, resulting in playing that is lithe and wonderfully transparent.

The Debussy pieces and Ravel's *Jeux d'eau* were recorded in the studio the day after a live recital at Southampton's Turner Sims from which *Gaspard* and *La valse* derive. There's no obvious difference between the two (and the live components are technically impressive).

While Taverna offers a fine *Gaspard*, the competition is pretty overwhelming. His 'Ondine' is a touch slow to my mind and climaxes can be a touch underwhelming compared to some – I'm thinking here not merely of the scorching Argerich but of Bavouzet too. Similarly, the tolling B flat of 'Le gibet' doesn't have either the barely contained angst of the Frenchman or the hypnotic impact of the daringly slow Osborne. And in 'Scarbo', while Taverna is technically absolutely up to the challenge, I missed a certain spectral quality, though the close of the piece is suitably insubstantial.

Taverna's *La valse* makes a fine finale, full of shimmering delicacy and filigree (with some fantastic glissandos), alive to the darkness of this corrupted dance: no wonder it was met with warm applause.

Harriet Smith

Gaspard, La valse – selected comparison:

Osborne (4/11) (HYPE) CDA67731/2

Gaspard – selected comparisons:

Argerich (8/75®, 12/87) (DG) 419 062-2GGA or 447 438-2GOR

Bavouzet (DABR) MDG604 1190-2

Images – selected comparison:

Bavouzet (12/08) (CHAN) CHAN10497

Liszt

'Complete Piano Music, Vol 46 –

Berlioz Transcriptions'

Bénédiction et serment: Deux motifs de

Benvenuto Cellini, S396. Danse des sylphes de

La Damnation de Faust, S475. L'idée fixe, S395.

Marche au supplice de la Sinfonie fantastique,

S470a. Marche des pèlerins de la symphonie

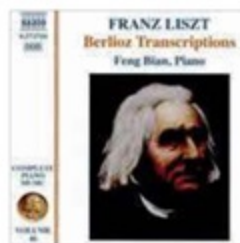


'Luminosity and sensitivity': Alessandro Taverna impresses in Debussy and Ravel

Harold en Italie, S473ii. Ouverture des Francs-juges, S471. Ouverture du Roi Lear, S474

Feng Bian *pf*

Naxos (M) 8 573710 (65' • DDD)



Naxos's intrepid march through all Liszt's piano music, begun 20 years ago, has now reached Vol 46. If Leslie Howard's epic survey, 99 discs on Hyperion, is any measure, they're not yet quite halfway there. The latest instalment is devoted entirely to Berlioz transcriptions, played by Feng Bian. A native of Chengdu, China, Bian has studied at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, at Yale and at the University of Southern California.

Bian's programme spans the Berlioz-Liszt connection, one of the storied relationships between 19th-century composers. When they met in 1831 – Berlioz was 27 and Liszt 19 – their mutual admiration forged a friendship that would endure for 35 years. The earliest piece here, the overture *Les francs-juges*, dates from 1833, the year of the famous *Symphonie fantastique* transcription. The latest, the 'March of the Pilgrims' from

Harold in Italy and the 'Dance of the Sylphs' from *The Damnation of Faust* are both from 1866, the year after Berlioz essentially ended things when he declared the first Paris performance of Liszt's *Missa solennis* 'the negation of art'.

The most successful of these interpretations derive from the more familiar Berlioz scores. A persuasive dreamy quality suffuses the 'Dance of the Sylphs'. The 'March to the Scaffold', later and less pianistically demanding than the 1833 transcription of the entire symphony, scores a bull's eye in its effective conjuration of the colours of the orchestral original. Liszt's extended meditation on the idée fixe of the *Fantastique* emerges as a tender idyll of appealingly wistful innocence. Bian's understated approach to the Pilgrims' March from *Harold*, on the other hand, fails to leave much of an impression.

Though the Benediction and Oath from *Cellini* achieves a certain cumulative weight, the literally construed repeated chords of the finale grow tiresome. The longest work on the disc, the overture *King Lear*, seems to lose its way in a thicket of insufficiently differentiated recitative passages. Liszt carefully notated the orchestration of Berlioz's overture to his unfinished

youthful opera *Les francs-juges*, though not much of its flavour and vigour survives in this performance. In fact, for a sense of the atmosphere and urgency of the score, it's probably best to look elsewhere.

For a sampling of the quicksilver synergy that the Berlioz-Liszt interaction could achieve, Roger Muraro's recording of the *Symphonie fantastique* (Decca) is a good place to begin. **Patrick Rucker**

Liszt

'Life, Love & Afterlife'

Confutatis et Lacrymosa (Mozart), S550. Two Csárdás, S225. Erlkönig (Schubert), S558 No 4. Hungarian Rhapsody, S244 No 18. Isoldens Liebestod (Wagner), S447. Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este, S163 No 4. Liebestraum, S541 No 3. Paraphrase de concert sur Rigoletto (Verdi), S434. Phantasiestück über Motive aus Rienzi (Wagner), S439. Valse-caprice, S427 No 6. Venezia e Napoli, S162

Dejan Lazic *pf*

Onyx (P) ONYX4179 (78' • DDD)



Liszt's peripatetic life seems to invite travelogue programming. Dejan

Lazić's new Onyx CD touches on several places that inspired important musical responses, including Hungary, Italy, Vienna and Germany.

Lazić maintains a languorous pulse in the 18th Rhapsody's *lassan*, allowing tonal ambiguity to establish an ominous atmosphere. Glittering passages introduce the *friss* with what could almost be heat lightning playing around the horizon of a dark and louring sky. Both Csárdás are crisp and appropriately driven, with the *Csárdás obstinée* in particular calling to mind the contemporaneous Hungarian Historical Portraits.

A sparsely pedalled 'Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este' from the Third *Année* creates a curiously *secco* effect, more pointillist than Impressionist. The explicitly spiritual dimension of the score, Liszt's evocation of 'the well of water springing up into everlasting life' from St John, is left to the imagination.

In the *Rigoletto* Paraphrase we hear the first hints of Lazić's tendency toward an unbridled, capricious *tempo rubato*. Rather than fulfilling its presumed purpose of enhancing musical spontaneity, Lazić pushes this arbitrary *leggiere* rubato beyond the bounds of eccentricity and into the realm of rhythmic distortion. The music's rhetorical underpinning starts to topple. It is puzzling because Lazić obviously takes great care to reproduce appropriate scansion of the verses of Goethe in 'Erlkönig' or of Freiligrath in the third *Liebestraum*. However, the rough-shod treatment given 'Bella figlia dell'amore', perhaps the best-known quartet in all Italian opera, leaves one wondering if Lazić has ever heard *Rigoletto*.

Whether due to whim or habit, this arbitrary rubato isn't limited to transcriptions of music originally sung but spills into evocations of the dance as well. The dancers suggested in the sixth *Soirée de Vienne*, replete with coy changes of register, seem to have recognised their quixotic excesses and, by the last waltz iteration, are on their knees in a nearby church whispering a hymn for forgiveness. In *Venezia e Napoli*, following a rhythmically coherent and persuasive 'Gondoliera' and a sternly atmospheric 'Canzone', Lazić launches into the 'Tarantella' at a speed so furious that breathing pauses seem like accidental gashes in an overall textural blur. A sense of abandon, if that was intended, becomes so much insensate note-spinning. The only antidote for this exhausting traversal is instant immersion in the shimmering beauties of the *Venezia e Napoli* performances by Bertrand Chamayou or Louis Lortie.

The frustration in all this is that Lazić is such an immensely gifted player, with a subtlety of touch and vast resources of colouristic nuance that must be the envy of his colleagues. Their fullest realisation, however, precludes exploration of those antiquated paths of willful mannerism that, ultimately, can only lead to vulgarity.

Patrick Rucker

Années de pèlerinage – selected comparisons:

Lortie (6/11) (CHAN) CHAN10662

Chamayou (3/12) (NAXOS) V5260

D Matthews

'Music for Solo Violin, Vol 2'

An Album Leaf for Sally. Four Australian Birds, Op 84a. Birthday Piece for Richard. Three Chants, Op 138. Fantasia on Paganini's Second Violin Concerto, Op 147 No 1. The National Anthem. Not Farewell. Fifteen Preludes, Op 132. Sonata, Op 8. Song Thrush Fragment

Peter Sheppard Skærved *vi*

Toccata Classics © TOCC0309 (70' • DDD)



I've never met David Matthews, but he appears to be a generous soul.

There's hardly a piece in this collection – all premiere recordings – that isn't dedicated to a friend, relative or colleague, and not one that doesn't share Matthews's characteristic mixture of melody, fantasy and master-craftsmanship. Matthews may have only four strings and a bow to work with here, but he's clearly known a lot of sympathetic violinists, Peter Sheppard Skærved prime among them. And like the writers of Oulipo, he seems to regard formal restraints as a spur to the imagination. His musical references range from Nielsen to the song of a New Zealand tui.

The imposing *Fantasia on Paganini's Second Violin Concerto* opens the disc; based on a cadenza and summoning the angular, brooding spirit of the great Italian in music that keeps threatening to evaporate in a shimmer of virtuosity. Skærved is fully on top of even its most stratospheric technical challenges, and elsewhere he sings Matthews's long, questioning middle-register melodies with full-throated expression. He hums gamely along to the *Three Chants* and instantly finds the character and colour of each miniature, from the plaintive song of a tame magpie (*Four Australian Birds*) and a satisfyingly crunchy transcription of *God Save the Queen* to the pure, shining vistas of the fifth Prelude, composed atop Monte Maggio.

Few pieces last longer than three minutes, making this an ideal disc to dip in and out of. And with booklet notes from both Matthews and Skærved – including the revelation that the recording process has inspired Matthews to write further works for solo violin – it gives one the rare and rewarding feeling of being part of an ongoing creative dialogue. **Richard Bratby**

Messiaen

La Nativité du Seigneur.

Offrande au Saint-Sacrement

Andrew Canning *org*

Sheva Collection © SH163 (65' • DDD)

Played on the Ruffatti organ of Uppsala Cathedral



There is no shortage of excellent recordings of Messiaen's second substantial organ

work, *La Nativité du Seigneur*, of 1935. The composer set down an authoritative mono account in 1956 for EMI France on his beloved La Trinité organ in Paris, which was in a parlous state of repair at that time. Subsequent interpreters have, wisely perhaps, stuck more closely to the printed score, which remains a major technical tour de force for any player, especially given its bizarre ametrical rhythmic challenges, cramp-inducing long-held chords and exacting registrational demands.

The latest artist to tackle this set of nine 'meditations', the British-born Andrew Canning, is note-perfect, having at his disposal a truly magnificent organ, the 71-stop Italian-built Ruffatti (2009) in Uppsala Cathedral, Sweden, where he has worked since 1996. Its stop-list is easily capable of matching each of Messiaen's timbral requirements. My only disappointment is that no use was made of the Cymbelstern or Glockenspiel stops. Another time, perhaps!

Alas, the CD booklet gives only the scantiest details, printing the biblical quotations (in English) preceding each movement, together with information on the organ and its player. It is disappointing that the highly complex hinterland of this breakthrough work is not explained. From a purely aural perspective, such ignorance might lead the unwary to consider much of this work as boring and indulgent – akin to an incoherent rambling improvisation (eg 'Le Verbe'). Things brighten up with 'Les enfants de Dieu', the first of three toccata-style movements (although it runs out of steam after a minute or so) and 'Les Anges', whose vividly fluttering wings are beautifully caught. After 'Les Mages' (The



Elisabeth Plank offers a 'thoughtful and beautifully played' debut disc - see review on page 65

Wise Men) have plodded by with heavy feet it is with some relief that we reach the concluding 'Dieu parmi nous', the best-known movement, with its 'nutty slack' harmony and that glorious added-sixth chord at the end.

A marvellous performance, therefore, let down by the presentation. **Malcolm Riley**

Messiaen

Les corps glorieux. Messe de la Pentecôte

Tom Winpenny *org*

Naxos (M) 8 573682 (72' • DDD)

Played on the main organ of Hildesheim Cathedral



This is the third in Tom Winpenny's Messiaen series for Naxos. Previous discs were recorded at St Alban's Abbey (*La Nativité*) and St Giles' Cathedral Edinburgh (*L'Ascension*), but for this recording of two further substantial organ scores, he has travelled to Hildesheim Cathedral in Germany.

Hildesheim boasts two organs playable from a single console, installed in 2014 by Seifert. With a combined tally of 100 speaking stops, these should provide

more than enough scope for Winpenny to find suitable sounds for Messiaen's detailed organ registrations. The trouble is, while he follows much of these registrations closely, the organs speak with undeniably German accents and, coupled with Winpenny's arms' length approach to Messiaen's visionary ideas, the result seems distant and cold.

These are technically excellent performances, and Winpenny maintains an impeccable poise through the long passages of monody which feature so strongly in *Les corps glorieux*. He is splendidly supported both by an organ that speaks with amazing clarity and a recording which is devoid of any lingering ecclesiastical atmosphere. Similarly, in the *Messe de la Pentecôte*, which frequently inhabits the very highest and lowest extremes of pitch, we have absolute clarity from pipes which are voiced to speak with an almost laser-like focus.

For those who relish the harmonic idiom of Messiaen's organ-writing and like to hear every single textural detail delivered with both precision and clarity, this disc will not disappoint. For me, however, much as I admire Winpenny's technical fluency, I wish he could seem more committed to the spiritual and emotional essence of the music. These two great Messiaen scores

need a little more interpretative involvement to be totally convincing in such a clinical audio environment.

Marc Rochester

Mussorgsky • Ravel • Schubert

'Poems & Pictures'

Mussorgsky Pictures at an Exhibition Ravel Gaspard de la nuit Schubert/Liszt Auf dem Wasser zu singen, D774 S558. Der Müller und der Bach, D795 No 19 S565

Leticia Gómez-Tagle *pf*

Ars Produktion (F) ARS38 224 (68' • DDD/DSD)



In Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*, there's no question that pianist Leticia Gómez-Tagle

can navigate the multi-textured thickets of notes in 'Ondine'. But she does not navigate them with the resolute steadiness, shapeliness and control one hears from others, although her sonority and bottled-up passion open up considerably in the tumultuous climax. The obsessive repeated B flats in 'Le gibet' are supposed to project on a uniform level but they don't here; and despite Gómez-Tagle's brisk and fluid



JULIANA SOLTIS



Entrez, le Diable!

The Virtuoso Cello at the Concert Spirituel

The bold debut album from internationally-acclaimed Baroque cellist Juliana Soltis.

AVAILABLE NOW

Amazon | iTunes

www.acisproductions.com

20 NOMINATED ARTISTS 20 INCREDIBLE TRACKS



"With 20 quality tracks it all adds up to a glorious melting pot of sound"

★★★★★ *Evening Standard*

Discover the very best in world & folk music from the past year and order your copy of the *Songlines Music Awards 2017* compilation album.

Available on CD, exclusively from

amazon.co.uk

pacing, her essentially matter-of-fact reading never gets soft enough to convey the composer's peculiar mixture of desolation and magic. While the pianist brings requisite suppleness and colour to 'Scarbo', her limited dynamic range and lack of rhythmic spark fall short of reference standards, be it Argerich, Pogorelich, Bavouzet, Michelangeli or, well, you get the idea.

Although Gómez-Tagle's basic tempo for the Schubert/Liszt 'Der Müller und der Bach' verges on inertia, her sensitive phrasing and almost three-dimensional separation of melody and accompaniment impress, in contrast to her square, colourless 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen'.

Following a plain-spoken opening 'Promenade', Gómez-Tagle pounces on the first picture in Mussorgsky's gallery ('Gnomus') with just the right ferocity, rushed phrase-ends and all. By contrast, she resists the tendency in younger pianists to overload 'The Old Castle' with fussy rubatos and is one of the few pianists to observe the *staccato* markings in the chords six bars from the conclusion. 'Tuileries' could be lighter, more playful, while Gómez-Tagle's ideally heavy yet vital tempo for 'Bydło' slackens as the movement progresses. She eases into the 'Unhatched Chicks' rather than hitting the *scherzino* tempo spot-on, and plays Samuel Goldenberg's declamatory music assertively and characterfully, in contrast to Schmuyle's relatively tepid repeated notes. And why that tentative accelerando leading into 'The Marketplace at Limoges'? She also hesitates at phrase-ends in the *meno mosso* triplets in 'The Great Gate at Kiev', slightly diminishing their grandeur.

In sum, memorable moments notwithstanding, this release faces extremely stiff competition. **Jed Distler**

Schubert

Fantasie, D940. Vier Ländler, D814. Marche caractéristique, D886 No 1. Variations on an Original Theme, D813. Grande marche, D819. Polonaise, D824. Rondo, D951

Andreas Staier, Alexander Melnikov *fp*
 Harmonia Mundi © HMM90 2227 (73' • DDD)



Bringing together two of the most individual pianistic brains around, giving them a copy of a Graf fortepiano and putting Schubert in front of them was always going to be interesting. Good interesting or bad interesting will very much depend how you like your Schubert.

If the F minor Fantasy means for you the classic Britten and Richter or the refinement of Perahia and Lupu or Lewis and Osborne, then this may be altogether too extreme – opening with an other-worldly quality that has a rare fragility to it but unafraid to rise to coruscating *fortissimos* when the music demands it. The *Allegro vivace* goes with a real oomph and in their reading as a whole they explore the work's contrasts to vivid effect. The return of the opening material in the final section is beautifully poised, while the fugal writing that follows here has an inexorable determination.

The brief Four Ländler, D814, are each treated to extraordinarily vivid characterisation, though part of me longed for something a little simpler. But no quibbles about the *Marche caractéristique*, which they launch with the Graf's ear-tickling percussion effects, something they delight in using in the marches on this disc. In this piece in particular, some might find the effects are overdone: check it out for yourself in track 6 at 4'23" and then 5'09" – maybe the joke will wear thin with time, but for me it hasn't done yet.

Both the set of Variations, D813, and the A major Rondo, D951, can seem a tad long-winded in some hands, though not, I hasten to add, in the excellent Lewis/Osborne set. Melnikov and Staier bring to the variations a lustrous range of colour (how delicately sombre Var 5 is here, in complete contrast to the buoyancy of Var 6, while the lolling dotted rhythm of the final one is pure joy). In the Rondo we have not only the gentleness of the theme itself but endlessly imaginative touches which make it constantly alluring, and the highest register of the piano is fantastically crystalline, a quality well caught by the recording itself.

It would have been good to have some information about the fortepiano itself in the booklet (and I can't find anything on HM's website either) but no matter. A compelling addition to the Schubert duet discography. **Harriet Smith**

F minor Fantasy – selected comparisons:
 Britten, Richter (8/00) (DECC) 466 822-2DM
 Lupu, Perahia (3/86) (SONY)

SK39511 or 88697 85811-2

Fantasy, Rondo, Variations – selected comparison:
 Lewis, Osborne (12/10) (HYPER) CDA67665

Toch

Piano Sonata, Op 47. Zehn Anfangs-Etuden, Op 59. Burlesken, Op 31. Capriccetti, Op 36. Drei Klavierstücke, Op 32. Kleinstadtbilder, Op 49. Zehn Mittelstufen-Etuden, Op 57
 Anna Magdalena Kokits *pf*
 Capriccio © C5293 (61' • DDD)



'Canada, Malaga, Rimini, Brindisi...' No need to be embarrassed if that

entertainingly tongue-twisting *Geographical Fugue* has, until now, been your only experience of the music of Ernst Toch. The Viennese pianist Anna Magdalena Kokits confesses to having discovered Toch via exactly the same route. Since then, she's mastered his idiom, and this is an affectionate, eloquent and vividly played collection of his piano works from the First World War until his forced exile in 1933.

They're very much products of the era of Neue Sachlichkeit, with Hindemith being the most obvious point of comparison until familiarity renders Toch's own voice – with its wry humour and hints of Impressionism – audible. Toch was a master-miniaturist. Of the 48 separate movements recorded here, the longest is just 3'25". But the three-movement Sonata of 1928 incorporates a remarkably concentrated sonata-form argument as well as an atmospheric intermezzo and a playful, Haydn-esque finish in barely seven minutes.

The tiny sketches of cats, geese and marketplace chatter in the engaging *Echoes from a Small Town* (1929) are practically musical haikus; none of the 10 *Études for Beginners*, Op 59, lasts longer than one minute either. After the Sonata, the three *Burlesques*, Op 31, are the most substantial pieces here, and Kokits – as she does throughout – nicely captures their contrast of brilliant foreground and overcast middle-distance, playing with just enough rhythmic flexibility to let the character of each miniature emerge.

It's frustrating not to have English translations for Toch's more detailed titles, and Kokits's booklet notes are stronger on general biography than on specific works. Still, given that the composer never meant all these pieces to be heard together, this is a surprisingly listenable programme – especially in performances as fresh and perceptive as these. **Richard Bratby**

Sergey Rachmaninov

'Solo Piano Recordings, Vol 4 – The Thomas A Edison Recordings'
 Chopin Waltzes – No 5, Op 42 (two takes); No 8, Op 64 No 3 (three takes) Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody, S244 No 2 (three takes)
 Mozart Piano Sonata No 9, K331 – Andante grazioso (two takes) Rachmaninov Prelude, Op 3 No 2 (two takes) D Scarlatti/Tausig Pastorale, K9 (two takes)
 Sergey Rachmaninov *pf*

Naxos historical mono (M) 8 111407 (72' • ADD)

Recorded April 18-24, 1919



The 14 tracks here are of six titles Rachmaninov recorded for Edison in New

York over four days in April 1919. Acoustic recordings, of course, but made by Edison's patent hill-and-dale process in which the stylus moves up and down the groove rather than from side to side. The advantage is that it captures the piano tone better; the disadvantage is that it produces significantly greater surface noise. This Naxos release is, as far as I am aware, the first time that all these immensely important documents have been released together; certainly their contents have never before been heard so clearly – once, that is, you have become used to the sound of two people walking out of step on Chesil Beach. Ward Marston's transfers have a higher level of swish than those on RCA but the piano tone (so poor in earlier incarnations that it was assumed that the studio piano was a bad upright) is far superior in depth and detail. Now it is clearly a decent grand (probably a Lauter) and you can hear Rachmaninov in all his glory.

There are two takes of each work – except the Liszt Rhapsody which has three – for no other reason than Edison requiring more than one perfect take so that the stamper could be replaced when it wore out. Each take varies little from the other, though there is a rare fluffed note at 0'22" in the first take of the Scarlatti-Tausig *Pastorale*. The Liszt Rhapsody is simply stunning, replete with Rachmaninov's own stylistically anachronistic cadenza. As Jonathan Summers observes in his quite excellent note, 'his cast-iron technique is breathtaking and the three consecutive takes show its infallibility'. Whether or not you approve of the way he handles Chopin's Op 42 Waltz or the theme-and-variations movement from K331, Rachmaninov's pianism is utterly and undeniably compelling.

One for the pianophile for sure, but also for the non-specialist to sample the unique gifts and earliest recordings of one of the greatest pianists who has ever lived. Naxos promises a further volume of all the surviving takes of the two other titles Rachmaninov recorded for Edison before he moved to Victor. What treasures – and what a service Naxos has performed in making them available in this form.

Jeremy Nicholas

Alberto Reyes

JS Bach/Busoni Chaconne Chopin Polonaise-fantaisie, Op 61 Franck Prélude, choral et fugue Schumann Piano Sonata No 2, Op 22

Alberto Reyes *pf*

VAI (F) VAIA1284 (66' • DDD)



I first encountered the cultivated and masterful pianism of Alberto Reyes on

a hard-to-find 1995 Connoisseur Society release devoted to Liszt's Verdi Paraphrases, and later had the pleasure of reviewing his all-Schumann double-CD set in these pages (6/11). His newest release may be his best yet. Unlike certain pianists who view the Bach-Busoni Chaconne as a virtuoso display piece in and of itself, Reyes's patiently expansive rendition adds up to a masterclass in how to build assiduous climaxes, how to intelligently scale one's dynamics and how to balance the massive textures in sonorously judicious proportions.

By contrast, the Franck Prelude is uncommonly animated and translucent in Reyes's fluent hands, followed by a Chorale anchored by firmly projected bass lines and a sweeping Fugue that benefits from his favouring line over mass. If Reyes's Chopin *Polonaise-fantaisie* lacks the cutting edge and galvanic brilliance of Horowitz's classic live 1966 Carnegie Hall recording, his intimately drawn, gently swaggering way with the main theme that follows the introduction keeps the polonaise rhythm in focus. There's more backbone than usual to the moody central section, while, conversely, Reyes resists pressing ahead in the final peroration: an unconventional yet convincing interpretation.

While Reyes is not about to outstrip Martha Argerich or Marc-André Hamelin in the Schumann G minor Sonata's swifter movements, his thoughtful musicality easily elevates him across the finish line. He uncovers important inner lines and pointed accents within the first movement's broken chords and distinctly characterises the Rondo's thematic contrasts, cannily sidestepping the music's potential for textural clutter. I especially warm to Reyes's eloquent *Andantino*, where the right-hand melodies and left-hand arabesques interweave with heartfelt flexibility. Reyes's booklet notes are as articulate and thought-provoking as his music-making. In short, this gratifying and well-engineered release is highly recommended. **Jed Distler**

À la russe'

Balakirev Isalmey, Op 18 Rachmaninov Piano Sonata No 1, Op 28 Stravinsky The Firebird (transcr Guido Agosti) – Danse infernale; Berceuse; Finale Tchaikovsky Morceaux, Op 72 – No 5, Méditation; No 17, Passé lointain. Scherzo à la russe, Op 1 No 1

Alexandre Kantorow *pf*

BIS (F) BIS2150 (76' • DDD/DSD)



There are half a dozen encores, or quasi-encores, here that proclaim an

outstanding young artist at work – least predictably so, perhaps, the two late Tchaikovsky pieces. Velvety cushioned tone and generous pedalling, allied to obvious special affection, help Alexandre Kantorow to plumb the inexhaustible well of Tchaikovsky's sympathetic lyricism (especially Schumannesque in the case of 'Passé lointain'). At the other extreme, Guido Agosti's blood-and-guts transcription of three numbers from *The Firebird* shows off the industrial-strength bass of Kantorow's Yamaha; the early Tchaikovsky Scherzo brims over with panache and relish; and *Isalmey* rivals even Berezovsky for the title of cleanest and most exhilarating modern account.

If Kantorow's Stravinsky and Balakirev show that his *fortissimo* can shake the chandeliers from the ceiling when he chooses, his Rachmaninov is notably more classical, as befits a 40-minute sonata. Not that it lacks passion or virtuosity; just that these are properly subordinate to architecture and flow. If this leaves me ultimately a little unsatisfied, that's because the Sonata needs more emotional extremes – more fantasy, desperation and risk – if it is to justify its length. Niggling doubts about the piano sound caused me to check in the booklet. Not that all Steinways necessarily beat all Yamahas, but in this case I did sense a certain constriction in colouristic range and a lack of orchestral fullness.

Admittedly, by comparison, Ashkenazy's Steinway on Decca sounds curiously dry, almost strangled in tone, and at under 34 minutes the playing itself feels at times a little perfunctory. The kind of sound and sensibility I realise I was craving is to be found from Gordon Fergus-Thompson on Kingdom: spacious and orchestral in texture, free and dreamlike in phrasing, clamorous to the point of desperation when called for, and closest of any I have heard to the composer's own estimated duration of 45 minutes. Encountering it again after

a long interval made me forget any faults the piece might have and put it straight on my bucket-list for playing before I die.

David Fanning

Rachmaninov – selected comparisons:

Fergus-Thompson (6/89) (KING) KCLCD2007

Asbkenazy (3/12) (DECC) 478 2938DH

‘L’arpa notturna’

Glinka Nocturne **Hindemith** Harp Sonata

Liszt Le rossignol, S250/1 **Maayani** Maqamat

Posse Variations on ‘The Carnival of Venice’

René Légende d’après ‘Les elfes’ de Leconte

de Lisle **Rota** Sarabanda e toccata

Schubert Nachtstück, D672

Elisabeth Plank *hp*

Ars Produktion © ARS38 229 (62’ • DDD/DSD)



A debut recording is a statement of intent, and when the artist in question comes

trailing as many accolades as the young Viennese harpist Elisabeth Plank, it’s one worth taking seriously. ‘The harp is still “suffering” from the effects of the nineteenth century’, writes Plank, but she acknowledges the importance of the 19th-century virtuoso repertoire, and Romantic showpieces by Glinka, Wilhelm Posse and Henriette René are the cornerstones of her programme. Substantial 20th-century works provide a necessary contrast, with transcriptions of piano pieces by Schubert and Liszt helping to reinforce the shadowy, moonlit connotations of the disc’s title.

That’s appropriate, because Plank has a real command of light and shade. She’s adept at creating musical perspective; a soft-edged, almost muted accompaniment against which foreground figures glint and sing in shades that can range from the brilliant to the sombre, often within the same phrase. She evokes a suitably gothic atmosphere in René’s ‘légende’ *Les elfes* and a vivid clarity in Nino Rota’s *Sarabanda e toccata*; and there’s an intriguingly menacing air about Plank’s own transcription of Schubert’s ‘Nachtstück’, D672.

If I’ve a reservation, it’s that Plank’s rubato can sometimes sap the energy from the musical argument. The sounds are ravishing; but the overall mood is languorous, and a greater sense of momentum might have helped Hindemith’s Harp Sonata make its points more clearly. This is a thoughtful and beautifully played disc, but the most striking moment comes in the forthright gestures and subtle layering of Ami



Alexandre Kantorow, who brings ‘panache and relish’ to his new recording of Russian repertoire

Maayani’s *Maqamat* (1984) – a work that is, as Plank puts it, ‘far removed from the concept of “beautiful sound”’. By this point, you might well be grateful for that.

Richard Bratby

‘Dance Fantasies’

Albéniz Tango, Op 165 No 2 (arr Godowsky)

Bizet L’arlésienne, Op 23 – Minuet

(arr Rachmaninov) **Chopin** Waltzes – No 1, Op 18;

No 2, Op 34 No 1; No 3, Op 34 No 2 **Czerny**

Variations on a Famous Viennese Waltz, Op 12

Godowsky Alt-Wien **Kreisler** Liebesfreud.

Liebesleid (both arr Rachmaninov) **Rameau**

Sarabande. Tambourin (both arr Godowsky).

Nouvelles suites de Pièces de clavecin – Gavotte

et six doubles; Les sauvages **Ravel** La valse

Vecsey La valse triste (arr Cziffra)

Catherine Gordeladze *pf*

Antes Edition © BM319300 (77’ • DDD)



Pianist Catherine Gordeladze begins her recital promisingly with hard-hitting yet virile readings of two Rameau-Godowsky transcriptions plus two pure, unadulterated Rameau pieces (well, mostly unadulterated).

She gives Czerny’s rarely performed Variations an appropriately *affettuoso* spin. However, her lurching heave-ho rhythms and choppy phrasing throughout the three Chopin waltzes are frankly beyond the pale.

Gordeladze tends to break the pulse when rolling chords in the Bizet-Rachmaninov transcription but otherwise her deliberately clipped, slightly arch interpretation passes muster. Her rhythmic distortions cause the Kreisler-Rachmaninov *Liebesleid* and *Liebesfreud* to lose shape and momentum as they unfold. What the Godowsky *Alt-Wien* and Albéniz-Godowsky *Tango* lack in a basic overall pulse is compensated by fanciful nuances and dabs of colour.

The Vecsey-Cziffra *Valse triste* focuses too closely on background figurations and not enough on the transcription’s flashy, darting lines: the opposite of Cziffra’s own, even more mercurial performance. Lastly, Gordeladze’s antsy rhythmic sense causes Ravel’s *La valse* to sputter in fits and starts, with little cohesion. How ironic that a release titled ‘Dance Fantasies’ largely consists of performances that defy you to dance.

Jed Distler

Howard Skempton

Arnold Whittall profiles the British composer who turns 70 in October, and applauds his blend of accessibility and unpredictability

A listing of the most prominent British composers born between 1943 and 1947 highlights the 20th century's remarkable musical diversity: and pairing Brian Ferneyhough with Gavin Bryars (they were born on the same day – January 16, 1943) or Michael Finnissy with Michael Nyman underlines the kind of extreme disparities often said to make 20th-century music so different from that of earlier eras. All the same, simply labelling composers as either conservative or experimental, complex or minimalist, as if such categories were always clear and mutually exclusive, bears little relation to aural reality. Compositions short and simple enough to need only basic technical expertise in performance can prove intensely elusive expressively, while compositions notated so elaborately that accurate performance seems virtually impossible might be unambiguously direct and forceful in the feelings and attitudes they convey. Interesting composers have always tended to reference, even to blend, accessibility and unpredictability, and so it is with Howard Skempton, whose 70th birthday is being marked in various ways during 2017 (for instance, at St Hilda's College, Oxford, in June; and at Kings Place, London, and Wells Cathedral in October).

His music suggests a conviction that the best way to be truly serious in matters of art is to avoid ponderousness

Skempton's early association with the supreme musical maverick of the 1960s and '70s Cornelius Cardew marked him out as 'experimental', questioning the technical and aesthetic conventions of a post-war cultural phase when – even in Great Britain – expressionistic modernism came close to taking over the compositional mainstream. In the later 20th century, composers as different as Britten, Webern and Feldman all had their vociferous advocates; but it takes an unusual degree of open-mindedness to admire all three, as Skempton does, and to perceive that, in Britten's case particularly, 'beauty' is 'allied to a sort of strangeness, and an originality'.

As such comments show, Skempton has unprejudiced responses to music of all kinds, and those responses connect with a capacity for finding 'a sort of strangeness' in places that many – perhaps most – contemporary composers avoid. If hymn-like diatonic harmonies and simple, often waltz-like rhythms are as acceptable as modal and even, on occasion, 12-note routines, there is a risk that the resulting music



will be identity lite, as bland and anonymous as muzak. But Skempton, in some ways not unlike that ancient mariner in the Coleridge poem he set for baritone, horn, piano and string quintet in 2015, has the knack of catching and holding the attention with a few, often quiet sounds that manage to shrug off much of their long history while also questioning their new contexts. Quietness and brevity are basic to his earliest listed work, *A Humming Song* (1967) for piano; if the great experimental pioneer John Cage made piano music strange in *4'33"* by shunning all those sounds that result when the instrument's keys are struck and hammers activate the strings, or the player sings along, Skempton gently estranges piano music by requiring his executant to be doubly active, not just playing *A Humming Song's* 76 notes 'as slowly and quietly as possible', but also simultaneously humming 14 of them.

Ever since Michael Nyman quoted the equally brief and reticent *Snowpiece* (1968), along with *Waltz* (1970), both for piano, at the end of his book *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (first published 1974), Skempton has been celebrated as the master of the unobtrusive yet characterful miniature, with a reverence for the simplest of compositional traditions that is more affectionate than ironic, suggesting a conviction that the best way to be truly serious in matters of art is to avoid ponderousness and over-insistence. 'Lightness of being' is of the essence, but so is sober practicality; this fits with the fact that for several years Skempton made a living working as an editor for music publishers, and more recently by teaching composition.

For quite a while it seemed that Skempton preferred to remain at a tangent to the mainstream of the big musical occasion – the symphony concert or large-scale choral or operatic event focusing on a magnum opus bidding to enter the standard repertory alongside all those constantly recycled masterworks from past centuries. Compositions for relatively



SKEMPTON FACTS

Born Chester, October 31, 1947

Studies Failing to gain admission to the University of York or the Royal Manchester College of Music, he studied composition with Cornelius Cardew (1967-71).

Professional activities

After 1971 he worked in music publishing. Currently he teaches composition at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Landmarks in composition

Lento (1990) for orchestra, commissioned by the BBC and issued on CD by NMC. *Tendrils* (2004) for string quartet won two chamber music composition prizes in 2005, and *The Moon Is Flashing* (2007) for tenor and orchestra won a British Composer Award in 2008. His *Five Rings Triples* for church bells was part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad Composers project.

Skempton on music

'Composer and tradition are bound in a relationship: one that is, or should be, complex and fraught with ambivalence.' (2014)

'All music worth listening to, even when slow or contemplative, is marked, or coloured, by a sense of urgency.' (2016)

substantial forces, such as the orchestral *Chorales* (1980), *Chorales 2* (1987) and *Lento* (1990), remain the exception; the affirmative continuities fundamental to traditional tonal symphonic music cannot exactly satisfy a composer who declares an interest in 'harmonic instability' and says, 'I like subtle shifts.' But this does not mean recourse to densely dissonant and turbulently polyrhythmic writing. Skempton relates to a basic principle of musical modernism, in which the organically integrated tonal designs representative of classicism yield to balanced sequences of distinct if interacting episodes, some of which might even be detachable from the whole without causing that whole to self-destruct. As if to illustrate such thinking, during the last decade Skempton has produced several 'non-miniatures', with the two most diverse now juxtaposed on the same CD. While *Only the Sound Remains* (2009) for solo viola and 15-strong instrumental ensemble combines the principle of a recurrent passacaglia theme with a suite-like collection of strongly contrasted episodes, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* projects the obsessiveness of its main character through a strongly unified half-hour span whose contrasting elements always defer to the music's all-governing moods and materials. Here, for once, a stark principle laid down by Ralph Waldo Emerson in a poem set by Skempton – 'all things are of one pattern made' – seems to determine the compositional fabric.

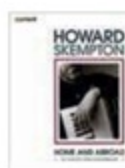
The less tightly woven connections of *Only the Sound Remains* with a poem by Edward Thomas describing a no-longer functioning watermill shows that Skempton can connect with elegiac Englishness without for a moment aping its other

20th-century exponents from Elgar to Birtwistle and beyond. His acute response to Britten's emotional ambivalence and expressive caution is complemented by his relishing of Webern's restrained intensity and also by referencing the more extended constraints of Feldman's musico-dramatic abstractions. With such an undemonstrative aesthetic impulse it makes sense that the clearest forms of emotional release, and the most potently ritualistic musical designs, are to be found in his settings of texts. But Skempton's personal voice is no less transparently immediate in instrumental miniatures for his own instrument, the accordion, as well as for the piano – works which may initially have been thought of, like postcards sent to friends, as linked to personal, passing events, but which set up eloquent resonances that are enhanced by repeated listening. Among the most memorable, *One for the Road* (1976) for accordion and *Trace* (1980) for piano might be singled out, but the various collections on discs like 'Home and Abroad' (nla – see below) and 'Surface Tension' (Mode, 11/98) underline the unique appeal of sequences that offer specially satisfying surveys of the Skemptonian soundscape.

Skempton reaches out to a broader kind of vocal expression in choral and solo settings of texts that embrace a wide range of secular and sacred sources. Such liturgical items as the *Magnificat and Nunc dimittis* (*Edinburgh Service*) and the *Missa brevis* preserve functional decorum while projecting strong musical presences; by contrast, 'Rise up, my love', setting verses from the Song of Solomon, moves away from the choir stalls towards the more overtly passionate world of Romantic poetry (Shelley, Longfellow, Emerson, Flecker, Yeats, Edward Thomas, Mary Webb), which Skempton sets with uninhibited élan. As he moves from the half-hour *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to DH Lawrence's 'Man and Bat' (2017; also for Roderick Williams, and due to be premiered this month at Sheffield's Upper Chapel), the distinctive personality and formal integrity of this least pretentious, most positively 'strange' of English composers has never been clearer. 6

LISTEN TO SKEMPTON

Three recordings revealing his distinctive personality



'Home and Abroad: 32 Pieces for Accordion'

Howard Skempton *acc*

Content (4/98)

This out-of-print disc is worth seeking out: 32 pieces in 66 minutes, all performed by the composer, create an absorbing close-up of Skempton's musical world, which centres on the wide appeal of the intensely personal.



'The Cloths of Heaven: Choral Music and Songs'

Exon Singers / Matthew Owens *org*

Delphian (12/08)

There are striking juxtapositions here between the liturgical – *Missa brevis*, for example – and enraptured yet economical settings of Burns, Emerson and Yeats.



The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

Only the Sound Remains

Roderick Williams *bar* Christopher Yates *va*

BCMG / Martyn Brabbins

NMC (6/17)

Two large-scale works: the obsessive narrative voice of Coleridge's troubled rememberer is contrasted with the viola concerto's more fragmented yet no less compelling emotional trajectory.

Vocal



Alexandra Coghlan listens to William Petter, who died last year aged 34:

'This collection is both a touching personal memorial and a tantalising glimpse of a talent just coming into bloom' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 75



Jeremy Nicholas dips into the songs of Donald Swann:

'Swann's Lieder style is hard to pin down, but it is an unmistakably English voice' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 76

JS Bach

Cantatas - No 152, Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn^a.

No 199, Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut.

No 202, Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten

('Wedding Cantata')

Carolyn Sampson sop^a Andreas Wolf bass-bar

Freiburg Baroque Orchestra / Petra Müllejans

Harmonia Mundi © HMM90 2252 (63' • DDD • T/t)



Bach's dozen or so solo cantatas are all memorable for their vocal expression

and refined instrumental commentary but here we have three cantatas from Bach's extraordinarily fruitful time in Weimar – offering a particular glimpse into the *recherché*, liberating commissions for the intimate court chapel, the Himmelsburg, alongside the ubiquitous secular *Wedding Cantata*.

Surprisingly, this trio of works has not (to my knowledge) been grouped together on record before and yet they complement each other with a remarkable freshness and enterprise that perfectly define Bach's creative muse in his mid-twenties. The lightness, colour and freewheeling variety of the musical idioms with which Bach experimented are evident in each work, but none more than *Weichet nur* – a longtime recorded favourite for sopranos from the immediate post-war period. *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut* could not represent more of a contrast with its heady rhetoric, strewn with graphic imagery, and Cantata No 152 provides a perfect interlude with its attractive array of soprano and bass arias, closing with perhaps the prototype duet for an emotive dialogue between Jesus and the Soul, which was to become a favourite conceit throughout Bach's career.

Carolyn Sampson is arguably the most experienced, assured and wide-ranging of current Bach sopranos. With this latest recital she does not disappoint. Sensitivity to the evolving line and projection of text, both of which she manages with warmth and dark-hued reflection, forms a

consistent part of her delectable armoury. If the *Wedding Cantata* is state-of-the-art in its balance and idiomatic ease, the Freiburgers take a rather unrelentingly serious view of proceedings: not much wit in the volleys of Cupid's darts which Bach infuses into the instrumentation; the final Gavotte ('may your love bring forth blossoms') is decidedly short on rapture.

Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn feels far more as if singers and instrumentalists have discovered a collective view. This extends to a sublime account of *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut*. Sampson is on form in both, joined in the first by the impressive Andreas Wolf, her rhetorical placement and poise of No 199 right up there with Elly Ameling's almost peerless reading under Helmut Winschermann (Philips – nla). The resonant and authoritative Freiburgers encapsulate the profound remorse of the sinner, Sampson feeding off the assuaging strings in the 'Tief gebückt' with captivating supplication. This is really worth waiting for. **Jonathan Freeman-Attwood**

Bax • Delius

Bax Five Greek Folk Songs. I sing of a maiden that is makeless. Mater ora filium. Of a rose I sing a song. This Worldes Joie **Delius** An den Sonnenschein. Ave Maria. Durch den Wald. Frühlingsanbruch. Yes, here we shall feast (Her ute skal gildet staa). Midsummer Song. On Craig Ddu. Sonnenscheinlied. The splendour falls on castle walls. To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water

The Carice Singers / George Parris

Naxos © 8 573695 (72' • DDD • T/t)



Not much unites Delius and Bax beyond nationality and some mutual friends.

Despite the former composer's famous cosmopolitanism, it's Bax's part-songs and motets that appear more interesting here, at once rooted and ambitious. Delius's miniatures can appear parochial next to his masterpieces for voice and orchestra

while his penchant for European languages casts The Carice Singers in an unfavourable light.

There's some talent in this choir – the men are better than the women – but the overall sound can be woolly and standoffish, without a final degree of engagement with the text. Norwegian and German should induce a different approach to annunciation and shift the surface feel of the music as a result, but don't here. The hazy sound of the wordless *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water* understandably suits the group best but the bugle effects in *The splendour falls on castle walls* sound like something out of *Monty Python*.

There's a wonderful resonance to *Midsummer Song*, the final Delius work, with its trochaic 'wall of sound'. Into the Bax the choir raise their game in response to more complex music; they negotiate the slippery chromaticism of *I sing of a maiden* impressively. But, again, declamatory phrases like 'Saint Basil, since you go to school / recite your alphabet to show us' (from *Five Greek Folk Songs*) need to be delivered on the front foot, not as if at a Sunday evensong, and the choir's blend is frustratingly unsettled.

Parris demonstrates his ability to plot a long and complicated work in the monolithic *Mater ora filium* – to Bax what *Take him, earth, for cherishing* is to Howells – but the soprano tone collapses horribly at the end of the big chord at 5'22", and again when that same chord, thickened up, returns to close the piece.

Andrew Mellor

Bergman

And the lad went out in the morning (Och gossen gick sig ut i morgonstund). Four Songs for Mixed Chorus, Op 38a – The child piles up (Barnet travar); Film Manuscript (Filmmanuskript); A Spring Song (En vårvisa). Four Songs for Mixed Chorus, Op 44b. Hommage à Béla Bartók, Op 132. I have now lost the friend I loved (Den vänjag älskat haver jag nu mist). Lamento – Burletta. The Lassies (Tyttöset), Op 73b. My tree is the pine (Mitt träd är pinjen), Op 12 No 5. Nein zur Lebensangst,



'Elegant Lyricism': Roderick Williams (right) with composer Brian Elias – see review on page 70

Op 120. Our Country (Vårt land), Op 146. Petrarca-Suite, Op 118. Psalm, Op 50a. A Song of the Islands (Skärgårdsgossens visa). Springtime, Op 60. Summer is here (Nu är sommarn här). Summer Night (Sommarnatt). Traces of the Gods (Gudarnas spår), Op 88. Väinämöinen, Op 147. The West Wind (Vestenvinden), Op 73a
Helsinki Chamber Choir / Nils Schweckendiek
 BIS © ② BIS2252 (112' • DDD • T/t)



For many, Erik Bergman was responsible for freeing Finnish

music from its post-Sibelius stasis; for opening the country up to international musical currents and inducing the explosion of compositional talent that is still mushrooming today.

Bergman wrote in all genres but over half his output is choral. This collection might be subtitled '1936-2000' but it maps the composer's unaccompanied choral output in full. What we are really hearing is the central transition of 20th-century music charted via one man's work. Bergman moved from a frustrated and short-lived post-romantic period through to Schoenbergian dodecaphony and eventually

out-and-out serialism. In the latter, he clearly found his voice. Trusting only in technique, he delivered vivid, embracing, watertight and honest serial works that are as cleansing as they are challenging.

To witness that process portrayed musically is remarkable. In a work like *Mitt träd är pinjen* (1944) Bergman does a great deal with the material but the feeling is of pastoral reflection and the harmonies bear that out. In works from the 1950s such as *Lamento – Burletta* (1957, not an insignificant year for Finnish music) we start to hear the harmonic strain. By the time of the folk-song collection *Tyttöset*, Bergman's tonality is creaking, splintering and faltering altogether, just as it does midway through Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*. These three folk songs are also the only works here to set Finnish; the resulting shift in the gait and syntax of Bergman's music (next to the Swedish/Norwegian/German works) speaks volumes about language and its shaping of musical expression.

Eventually we get to Bergman's late setting of the Kalevala's runo 41, *Väinämöinen* (2000), which furthers his favoured structure of using a narrator (sung or spoken) in front of an echoing or scene-setting chorus. Bergman always knew what

he was doing but here he appears to know himself thoroughly; the tools he finds to reflect the painful narrative – not least the parallel harmonies – have big impact. Performances from the Helsinki Chamber Choir are technically impressive. At best they ring out with Bergman's conviction and talent; below that, they speak of a composer for whom technical matters came first rendered by a salaried radio choir on a Tuesday morning in October (this was formerly the Finnish Radio Chamber Choir). In that sense, they reflect their subject rather well. **Andrew Mellor**

Dvořák

Mass, Op 86 B175^a. Te Deum, Op 103 B176

Ewa Biegas *sop* ^a**Marina Rodríguez-Cusí** *mez*

^a**Javier Tomé** *ten* **José Antonio López** *bar*

Orfeón Pamplonés; Navarre Symphony Orchestra / Antoni Wit

Naxos © 8 573558 (63' • DDD • T/t)



For the latest instalment of Naxos's traversal of Dvořák's choral works, Antoni

Wit directs two of Spain's most venerable and prestigious musical institutions, the

Orfeón Pamplones (recorded just before their acclaimed visit to the 2015 BBC Proms) and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra, founded in 1879 by Pablo Sarasate, no less.

The Mass in D of 1887 is most often heard in its original version with organ accompaniment. The orchestral revision was commissioned by Novello in 1892, the same year that Dvořák penned his *Te Deum*. Although Wit's ponderous approach to the opening *Kyrie* spoils somewhat the composer's *Andante con moto* marking, rendering it sluggish, things perk up considerably with the sparkling *Gloria*, aided by crisp orchestral playing. Alas, there is some horribly wayward choral tuning around the six-minute mark. This occurs again later on in the quieter, descending passages in the *Benedictus*, when the unaccompanied choir is juxtaposed against the unwavering pitch of a particularly tasty electronic organ.

At full throttle, however, the choral singing is impressive, if a little soprano-heavy. Their Germanic-Latin diction is another plus. It is a pity, though, that the solo quartet did not agree beforehand on their pronunciation ground rules. The soprano, Ewa Biegas, is the main culprit in this respect. Mezzo Marina Rodríguez-Cusí is in particularly rich voice, ideal for this repertory, and both of the male soloists, Javier Tomé and José Antonio López, are on splendid form, relishing their legato lines, most notably in the ruminative *Agnus Dei*.

At half the length of the Mass, the popular *Te Deum* is in many ways a superior work – almost a mini four-movement choral symphony. Its largely joyous atmosphere is akin to Janáček in his most breezy, outdoors mood. The score's orchestral colours are vividly etched and matched by splendidly ebullient choral singing. **Malcolm Riley**

Elias

Geranos^a. Meet me in the Green Glen^b. Once did I breathe another's breath^c. Electra Mourns^d

^{bc}Susan Bickley *mez* ^{bc}Roderick Williams *bar*

^dNicholas Daniel *cor anglais* ^cIain Burnside *pf*

^aPsappha / Nicholas Kok; ^dBritten Sinfonia / Clark Rundell

NMC © NMCD235 (66' • DDD • T)

^dRecorded live at Cadogan Hall, London, August 11, 2012



Over almost five decades of composing, Brian Elias has created an output which, if not

large (his publisher's catalogue currently lists 48 entries), is substantial in content and conception.

This disc commences with *Geranos* (1985), its tangibly theatrical gestures integrated into a three-movement sequence as rigorous motivically as it is incisive rhythmically – not least in the lamentations of 'Adonidia', plangently realised by Nicholas Kok and Psappha. Forward almost 25 years and *Meet me in the Green Glen* (2009), set to poems by John Clare, proves a notable addition to the unaccompanied song-cycle. This recording alternates baritone and mezzo, with Roderick Williams bringing an elegant lyricism to the opening song and Susan Bickley a touching vulnerability to 'Love's Pains'. Williams is hardly less persuasive in *Once did I breathe another's breath* (2012), five settings from 16th-century poets whose vocal rhetoric and eloquence are complemented by a piano part limpidly rendered by Iain Burnside.

The programme ends with *Electra Mourns* (2012) – a scena on the protagonist's monologue in Sophocles' drama set to the original Greek, which contributes audibly to the hieratic nature of this music. String orchestra and cor anglais make an equivocal 'double' to the vocal part; an amalgam which evokes Baroque and Classical precedents alongside an instrumental part that draws resourcefully on more recent traditions. Bickley and Nicholas Daniel are assured in their contributions, with Clark Rundell drawing requisite intensity from the Britten Sinfonia.

Newcomers to Elias should begin with the scintillating disc of his orchestral pieces *The House that Jack Built*, *A Talisman* and *Doubles*, to which this arresting follow-up is cordially recommended. Those acquiring it can also hear two single-voice alternatives of the Clare song-cycle, free to download from NMC's website.

Richard Whitehouse

Fauré

'The Complete Songs, Vol 2'

La chanson d'Ève, Op 95^a. Shylock,

Op 57^b. Rêve d'amour, Op 5 No 2^c.

Hymne, Op 7 No 2^c. Puisqu'ici-bas

toute âme, Op 10 No 1^d. Tarantelle,

Op 10 No 2^d. Aubade, Op 6 No 1^e.

Barcarolle, Op 7 No 3^f. Notre amour,

Op 23 No 2^g. Le secret, Op 23 No 3^g.

Le pays des rêves, Op 39 No 3^h. Trois

Mélodies, Op 85^b. Le plus doux chemin,

Op 87 No 1ⁱ. Le ramier, Op 87 No 2^b.

Vocalises – No 7^j; No 22^a L'aurore^h

^{da}Lorna Anderson, ^{dh}Janis Kelly *sops* ^aSarah Connolly, ⁱAnn Murray *mezs* ^lIestyn Davies *counterten* ^eBen Johnson *ten* ^cJohn Chest, ^fNigel Cliffe, ^bThomas Oliemans *bars*

Malcolm Martineau *pf*

Signum © SIGCD472 (69' • DDD • T/t)



The second instalment of Malcolm Martineau's survey of Fauré's songs is

exceptionally beautiful, both in choice of material and quality of performance. The format replicates that of its predecessor (A/16): three sets or cycles – *La chanson d'Ève* (1910), the songs from *Shylock* (1889) and the Op 85 group (1902) – are juxtaposed with songs that span Fauré's entire career, shared between a carefully selected line-up of singers, nine in this instance. There are some lovely rarities here, notably the early Baudelaire setting 'Hymne' (1870), and a couple of duets, teetering on the virtuoso, that Fauré wrote in 1873 for Pauline Viardot's daughter Marianne, briefly his fiancée, and her sister Claire.

Two singers new to the series are heard in the main works. Sarah Connolly's performance of *La chanson d'Ève* is arguably the finest since Dawn Upshaw's – ecstatic yet restrained, and superbly controlled, both dynamically and emotionally, as Eve's awareness of the imperfections of Eden begins to register. Baritone Thomas Oliemans – dark-voiced, very elegant – tackles *Shylock* and Op 85. The *Shylock* Serenade blends swagger with sensuality: the 'Madrigal', addressed to Portia by the Prince of Aragon, is rightly more artfully poised and formal. His reined-in passion impresses in Op 85, where the Symbolist texts can seem dangerously overwrought.

The remaining singers are all familiar from the first disc. There's accomplished duetting from Janis Kelly and Lorna Anderson: elsewhere, Kelly's ability to sustain high, hovering lines is heard to advantage in the exquisite 'Le pays des rêves', while Anderson, with her warm middle registers, does wonders with the reflective 'Le secret'. John Chest, whose singing was a real revelation in Vol 1, is similarly excellent here. Ben Johnson and Iestyn Davies only get one song each, though both are highlights. Martineau's understanding of Fauré's piano-writing, in which less means more and virtuosity is avoided in favour of nuance, remains impeccable. **Tim Ashley**

La chanson d'Ève – selected comparison:

Upshaw, Kalisch (2/05) (NONE) 7559 79812-2



'Ecstatic yet restrained': Sarah Connolly sings Fauré with Malcolm Martineau

Fux

'Ave regina'

Alma redemptoris mater – K185; K187.

Ave regina caelorum – K205; K206; K207; K208.

Pia mater fons amoris, K176. Sonatas – K346; K367; K369; K377; K379; K397

Hana Blažiková *sop*

Accentus Austria / Thomas Wimmer *violone*

Deutsche Harmonia Mundi © 88985 41189-2

(57' • DDD • T/U)



The reputation of Johann Joseph Fux suffers from the fact that he was the author of one of the most influential counterpoint treatises in music history, *Gradus ad Parnassum*. I imagine few today have read it (though Haydn found it useful, and he was no slouch in a fugue), yet Fux remains tainted by the 'theorist' stain, which seems a little unfair; what music of his I have heard suggests that there is a goodly amount of personality lurking in there.

Of that music there are over 600 works, yet many remain unrecorded, and it is good to see this release showcasing some of the material he provided for the Imperial Court Chapel in Vienna (where he was

Kapellmeister from 1715 until his death in 1741). The ones here reflect the Habsburgs' Marian obsession in six antiphons – four settings of *Ave regina caelorum* and two of *Alma redemptoris mater* – plus the motet *Pia mater fons amoris*, all for soprano and small ensemble. Interspersed with these are six string trio sonatas probably designed for use in church.

The music is well constructed, as one might expect; the vocal pieces are sectional in layout, but there is variety in the chant-based K205 (yes, these are Köchel numbers) and the aria-and-recitative style of *Pia mater*. Character can range from the grace of K185 to the pensiveness of K206, and from the solemnity of K207 to the good cheer of K187, while the sonatas include a sturdy passacaglia in K377, a sinfonia in K346 and a sweet pastorale for recorders in K397.

In the end, however, it has to be admitted that this is not always the most compelling music. For all the effort that Accentus Austria put into it their typically Austrian gutsy string-playing, the sonatas can seem rather static; and despite the pure but strong soprano of Hana Blažiková the vocal pieces are not lyrically memorable. One for the curious ear, perhaps, but don't expect it to change your life. **Lindsay Kemp**

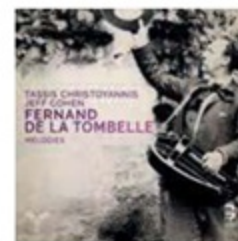
La Tombelle

'Mélodies'

Ballade. Cavalier mongol. Chant-Prière pour les Morts de France. Couplets de Chérubin. La croix de bois. Croyez-moi!. Elle est loin. Ha! les boeufs. Hier au soir. Il me l'a dit. Ischia. Les larmes. Les papillons. Passez nuages roses. La pernette. Pourquoi?. Promenade nocturne. Sans toi. Si le roi m'avait donné. Sonnet. Souvenir. Veux-tu les chansons de la plaine?. Vieille chanson

Tassis Christoyannis *bar* Jeff Cohen *pf*

Aparté © AP148 (74' • DDD • T/U)



Tassis Christoyannis and Jeff Cohen continue their survey of the lesser-known

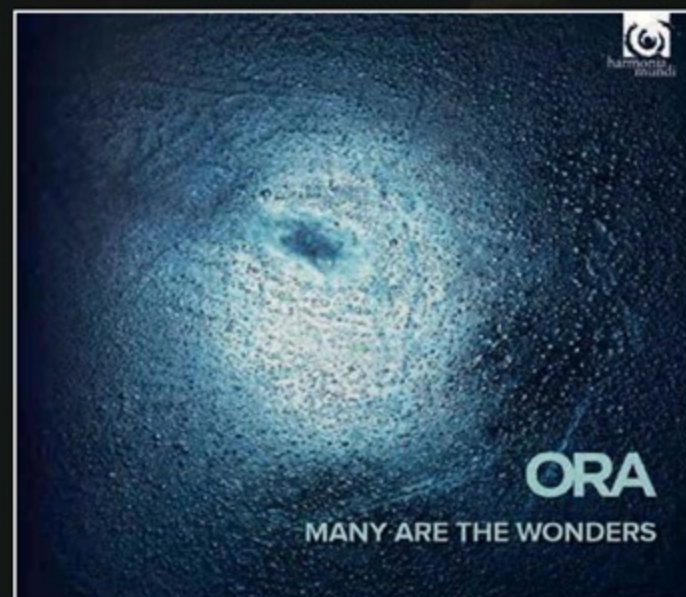
French song repertoire with this splendid disc of *mélodies* by Fernand de La Tombelle (1854-1928), a titled aristocrat, best known in his day as a virtuoso organist, though he also combined composition with work as a folklorist, writer and amateur astronomer. His songs were primarily written for performance at the salons he and his wife Henriette regularly hosted in their Paris apartment or their chateau in the Dordogne. The texts of many are attributed simply to an 'unknown author' –



ORA SUZI DIGBY

MANY ARE THE WONDERS

The opening years of the twenty-first century can justifiably lay claim to being a new golden age for choral music. I wanted to embark on a series of recordings to reflect this and to showcase some of today's best contemporary composers, placing their works in direct relief with masterpieces from previous ages. This recording, the second in our 'Renaissance gems and their reflections' series, looks at the music of Thomas Tallis, and we are delighted to have commissioned a number of talented composers to offer their personal reflections on his works. I hope that these new pieces, like Tallis' originals, will find their way into the repertoire of other vocal groups, delighting audiences both now and in the future.



HMM005284



'One bullseye after another': The Orlando Consort continue their magisterial Machaut series on Hyperion

thought to be Henriette herself, who was a playwright under the pseudonym Camille Bruno.

The songs themselves are variable. Duparc's influence is detectable in many of them, though one also notices a fondness for 'endless melodies' – self-referential but unrepeating – that suggests a strong familiarity with Wagnerian methodology. The best of him is wonderful. Among the high points are a ravishing setting of Lamartine's 'Ischia', its bittersweet mood beautifully conveyed, and the haunting 'Chant-Prière pour les Morts de France', an elegy for the fallen in the First World War. He's less successful, though, when it comes to genre pieces and folk-song arrangements. The orientalisms of 'Cavalier mongol' don't quite convince. 'La pernette', based on a traditional Burgundian tune, goes on for ever and leaves you with an un-dislodgeable earworm.

There's no mistaking the fineness of Christoyannis's artistry. He sculpts phrases with great refinement and warmth of tone. There's some superb soft singing here, above all in the melancholy 'Passez, nuages roses' and the regretful 'Souvenir'. His way with words is immaculate, as one might expect: in 'Ischia' we're aware we're listening to great poetry as well as beautiful

singing; his verbal dexterity steers us through 'La pernette', with its dialogues and multiple characters, though it doesn't quite redeem the song. La Tombelle's piano-writing is effective, if sometimes sparse: Cohen plays with subtlety and strength. It's all faultlessly done. **Tim Ashley**

Machaut

'Sovereign Beauty'

Comment qu'a moy lonteinne. Dame, a qui. Dame, ne regardés pas. De Bon Espoir/Puis que la douce/Speravi. De desconfort. Foy porter. J'ay tant/Lasse! Je sui/Ego moriar pro te. Un lay de consolation, 'Pour ce que plus proprement'. Quant j'ay l'espart. Se quanque Amours. Tres bonne et belle

The Orlando Consort

Hyperion © CDA68134 (64' • DDD • T/I)



series, but this is finer still. The lovely three-part virelai *Tres bonne et belle* teems with incident, the interplay of the voices a constant delight. More surprising are the melodic *coups de théâtre* of the two-voice

ballades *Dame ne regardés pas* and *De desconfort*, the latter reminiscent of Binchois (and incidentally, wouldn't an Orlando's disc devoted to that other great poet-composer be welcome!). The centrepieces are the fastidiously crafted ballade *Se quanque Amours* (reminiscent of Solage) and the two-voice *Lay de consolation*, a wonderfully judged postscript. Throw in a couple of motets and a few monophonic virelais (a genre which The Orlandos have down to a tee), and you have Machaut at his most engaging and varied; but this really is one bullseye after another.

Then there are the performances, aided by a sound recording that sets each voice up distinctly while allowing textures (and text, come to think of it) to come across with wonderful clarity from the off. Rarely since the Gothic Voices has the vocalisation of the lower lines appeared so self-evidently the right approach, even (or especially?) in the dense four-voice *Se quanque Amours*, whose compactness and lyricism forces admiration (as does Mark Dobell on the cantus line). The primacy of text is urged with great eloquence in the solo virelais, Donald Greig (whose voice hasn't been heard on its own so far in the series) turning in a very moving *Comment qu'a moy lonteinne*. (Interestingly, the Gothic Voices

recorded the same three virelais but with high voices where The Orlandos go low, and vice versa.) Any blemishes? Well, the textures aren't quite so clear in the two motets, and something very strange happens at the end of *De bon espoir/Puisque la douce/Speravi*. But the rest stands for The Orlandos at their very best, and if I hear a finer recording of 14th-century music this year I'll be very surprised.

Fabrice Fitch

Mahler

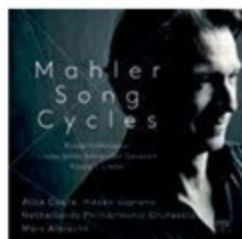
Kindertotenlieder. Lieder eines

fahrenden Gesellen. Rückert-Lieder

Alice Coote *mez* Netherlands Philharmonic

Orchestra / Marc Albrecht

Pentatone ② PTC5186 576 (62' • DDD/DSD)



The breadth and variety of the catalogue for these three great Mahler song groups is such that any new recording has to offer something distinctive. Alice Coote, happily, is a singer who seems incapable of being anything else. Her mezzo is rich and multicoloured, imbued with an intrinsic intensity and emotional complexity. There's never any doubting her intelligence as an artist or the commitment she brings as an interpreter. In some ways, then, this disc presents the sort of performances one would expect: deeply personal, vocally idiosyncratic (the highly individual Brigitte Fassbaender sounds almost mainstream by comparison) and never less than profoundly heartfelt.

There are drawbacks to her approach, though, in some unevenness and unsteadiness of line, and the phrasing can be bumpy. The voice is in constant flux, too: one moment there's richness and grandeur – in the grand final phrase of 'Ich hab' ein glühend Messer', for example – while the next the operatic veneer disappears to reveal a kind of breathy emotional nakedness beneath.

But the interpretations are often compelling, as well as remarkably tender, such as in the last phrase of 'Ging' heut' Morgen'. And listen to the astonishing hush that descends at 'ich bin gestorben dem Weltgetümmel' (from 3'40") in a memorable account of 'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen', sung as the last of the *Rückert-Lieder*.

Coote's *Kindertotenlieder* are fearless, too, made all the more intense, arguably, by vocal production that itself can sound almost pained – a stark contrast to the sovereign vocal command that, say, a

Christa Ludwig brings to these songs. It's not always beautiful, and Coote struggles to conjure up the sort of simplicity one wants at the start of 'Wenn dein Mütterlein', but there's never any doubting the emotional truth.

Pentatone's sound, slightly favouring the voice, is excellent, though it's very stingy of them to offer neither texts nor translations. Marc Albrecht and the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, terrific throughout, are particularly alive to the many gradations of dynamics and tempo that litter Mahler's scores, not least in the *ppp* conclusion of 'In diesem Wetter!' – a moving end to a moving disc.

Hugo Shirley

► See The Musician & the Score on page 46

Monteverdi

Vespro della Beata Vergine

La Compagnia del Madrigale; Cantica Symphonia;

La Pifarescha / Giuseppe Maletto

Glossa ② GCD922807 (124' • DDD • T/t)



This is a *Vespers* to catch attention, that's for sure: La Compagnia del

Madrigale, so well esteemed for their recordings of the Italian unaccompanied madrigal repertory, taking on Monteverdi's considerably larger-scale and more stylistically diverse sacred compilation, for which they have had to enlist the support of 19 singers extra to their own consort of six, bring in a band of 23 instrumentalists and put one of their own number out front as conductor. It's quite a leap.

What really makes this recording special, however, is a daring interpretative approach that makes it easily one of the most individual and distinctive *Vespers* on record. 'Haste and good work do not go together', Giuseppe Maletto quotes the composer as saying, and sure enough this is slow Monteverdi, really slow. Not just that but largely legato as well, as is evident right from the opening. The reasoning is based not just on a rejection of the idea that the modern tendency towards ever-faster tempos must necessarily be a good thing but also on a desire to establish a style that does not rely so much on accented and 'bulge' notes, which, says Maletto, contribute to a weakening of the horizontal line. The result is a performance in which 'legato is considered as a fundamental principle, [and] we take all the time that is necessary'. For similar reasons (and in another trend-opposing move), vocal ornamentation is firmly resisted.

Does that make it bland, or sleepy?

Well, clearly it is not going to be a punchily dramatic realisation in the manner of Gardiner's (*Archiv*, 1/91), nor a turbo rush like Christina Pluhar's (*Virgin/Erato*, 5/11, which, incidentally takes nearly 30 minutes less to play!). But while there are some dawdling moments in the choral psalms, for the most part this is a performance that reveals the immense beauty of the work, relishes the tensions of its interweaving lines and, within its chosen parameters, releases the madrigalian freedom of its ensemble declamation. Neither does it lack grandeur; the doxology at the end of 'Laetatus sum' is a massive outburst, the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* is grandly shaped, and the 'Amen' of the *Magnificat* is a hugely impressive terraced crescendo. And if 'Duo Seraphim' and 'Audi coelum' lose something of their usual ardency, the Marian meditations of the latter gain instead a seductive trance-like character. This, in other words, is a performance that deserves a hearing; like a Klemperer Beethoven symphony, it shows a faith in the build of its music that says everything can be inspected and savoured, nothing needs to be hurried.

The sound is clear and pleasing, though the solo singers are sometimes set further back than might be expected, at the risk sometimes of a certain lack of colour. The two-disc set also includes Monteverdi's alternative, six-part setting of the *Magnificat*, no less carefully tended than the rest. **Lindsay Kemp**

Mozart

Mass No 16, 'Coronation', K317.

Vesperae solennes de confessore, K339

Sandrine Piau *sop* Renata Pokupić *contr*

Benjamin Bruns *ten* Andreas Wolf *bass*

Accentus; Insula Orchestra / Laurence Equilbey

Erato ② 9029 58725-3 (52' • DDD • T/t)



The coupling is a time-honoured one: two of Mozart's best-loved church works from

the end of his Salzburg career. No wonder choirs love to sing them – and the aria 'Laudate Dominum' in the Vespers setting surely qualifies for 'greatest hit' status. Mozartians will be excited to hear a solo quartet led by the soprano Sandrine Piau in this music, and by the high-class contributions of Laurence Equilbey's own crack chamber choir Accentus and the newly formed period-instrument Insula Orchestra.

The problem is the acoustic. From the off, the choir's sound is recessed, while the

soloists are spotlighted to the extent of obscuring magical features such as the muted violin arabesques in the 'Incarnatus' of the Mass's *Credo*. The cathedral of Notre-Dame de Saint-Omer would appear to be quite a big space, although I have no idea how it compares with Salzburg Cathedral; nevertheless, the timpani boom rather, especially in the *Credo*, and the length of decay means that sudden changes of dynamic are obscured.

It's a great shame that a product of such class is compromised for want of slightly cannier miking. For the Mass, the greater clarity of Peter Neumann's Cologne recording – my overall choice in a *Gramophone* Collection (11/06) – remains preferable. For the *Solemn Vespers*, a recording such as Harnoncourt's, which this performance somewhat resembles, should suffice. One other point: there is no pocket for the booklet, which thus falls out every time you pick up the disc.

David Thresher

Mass – selected comparison:

Neumann (6/89) (EMI/WARN) 028458-2

Vespers – selected comparison:

Harnoncourt (3/96) (WARN) 2564 67611-1

Pärt

'Arvo Pärt Live'

Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten^a. Cecilia, vergine romana^a. Collage über B-A-C-H^b. Litany^c. Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen^d

^aThe Hilliard Ensemble; Bavarian Radio Chorus; Munich Radio Orchestra / ^dPeter Dijkstra,

^bRobert King, ^cUlf Schirmer, ^eMarcello Viotti
BR-Klassik © 900319 (70' • DDD)



'Arvo Pärt Live' covers a broader area than BR-Klassik's previous release of Pärt's

Te Deum (7/15), ranging from the early, quotation-heavy *Collage über B-A-C-H* via the ever-present *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten* – where Pärt's music flows with fluent ease – to two more recent large-scale works for soloists, choir and orchestra.

The terse, three-movement *Collage über B-A-C-H* will come as a shock to those fed on a diet of tintinnabuli Pärt. Here, the composer juxtaposes Bach fragments with jagged chromatic clusters. The second movement sets Johann Sebastian's Sarabande in D minor from his Sixth *English Suite*, BWV811, against eerily familiar atonal mirror-images of itself. This is dark homage rather than playful parody, however, and the Munich Radio Orchestra under Robert King get it right.

The *Cantus*, this time with Ulf Schirmer directing, is less convincing. Several recent recordings, including Kristjan Järvi's excellent rendition with the Baltic Sea Youth Philharmonic opt for a slower tempo to foreground the work's rich layering of string lines. Schirmer also takes his foot off the pedal but the music gradually loses any sense of forward motion and finally becomes stuck in its own canonic quagmire. Schirmer is more persuasive in the 20-minute *Cecilia, vergine romana* for choir and orchestra. It's not a work that gets aired too often, which is a shame, because the final section (which evokes something of Glass in its oscillating thirds) contains some of the composer's most beautiful moments.

The Hilliard Ensemble, Bavarian Radio Chorus (excellent in the seven *Magnificat-Antiphonen*) and Munich Radio Orchestra are all brought together for Pärt's powerful setting of the *Litany*, providing another striking ending to an impressive recording – resonant sub-basses shaking the very foundations of St Gabriel's Church, Munich, with low C sharps.

Pwyll ap Siôn

Cantus in memoriam Britten – selected comparison:

Baltic Sea Youth Philh, K Järvi (NAIV) V5407

Petter

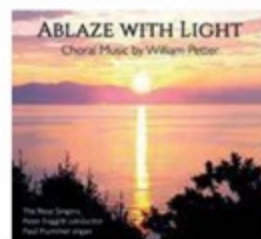
'Ablaze With Light'

St Magnus Mass. Vigil Mass. Come down, O love divine. The Good Shepherd Has Risen. The Lord's Prayer.

The Rose Singers / Peter Foggitt with

Paul Plummer *org*

Novum © NCR1393 (49' • DDD • T/t)



When the composer William Petter died in 2016 he was just 34 years old. This

first collection of his choral music, recorded posthumously in 2016 by a group of his musician friends and colleagues, is both a touching personal memorial and a tantalising glimpse of a talent just coming into bloom.

Two complete Mass settings are the centrepieces of a disc of sacred music for choir and organ. A former New College chorister, Petter's music grows ingenuously out of the English tradition of cathedral music in which he was trained. Holst, Finzi, Tavener and particularly Howells all feed into these works but there's also a strong seam of plainchant, as well as a debt to the French sacred tradition of Duruflé and Fauré, and more than a nod to Switzerland's Frank Martin.

Petter has a gift for vocal spacing, and the result is spacious music that seems, in these accomplished and carefully blended performances, deftly conducted by Peter Foggitt, to hang suspended in the air – harmonies shifting and reforming like a cloud of dust particles caught in the light of a cathedral window. The result, in the opening *Vigil Mass*, is music of affirmative, accessible beauty – asking expansive questions and always finding joy in the answers. The lulling, gentle waves of the *Sanctus* console, while the *Agnus Dei* opens the door to doubt and urgency – a solo cello (echoes of *The Protecting Veil*) a passionate, wordless intercessor.

The *St Magnus Mass* has a smokier, more incense-steeped darkness to it, pitting muscular choral forces against one another before the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* illuminate the texture. The shorter motets are attractive works with an eye to liturgical functionality but the final hymn-anthem *Come down, O love divine* is something larger – in every sense. A meditation on Vaughan Williams's glorious melody, it pays homage to one composer with tremendous skill and scope, without ever losing the voice of its new author.

Alexandra Coghlan

Schubert

Die schöne Müllerin, D795

Bo Skovhus *bar* Stefan Vladar *pf*

Capriccio © C5290 (59' • DDD • T/t)



Released 20 years on from his first recording of the cycle, Bo Skovhus's new *Schöne Müllerin* could hardly be more different from its predecessor. Reviewing that earlier Sony release (A/97, now reissued on Newton Classics), Alan Blyth described the Danish baritone's singing as 'altogether too macho and extroverted to represent truly what Müller and Schubert must have had in mind'.

Now, with vocal resources depleted, Skovhus certainly couldn't be accused of that. Here he is somewhat reticent, unwilling or, one suspects, unable to fill out his tone, which remains dry throughout and rather spongy and fuzzy in timbre. Capriccio's sound, set at a high level, struggles to capture it, too: I often found myself adjusting the volume.

Skovhus is not big on characterisation, and generally underplays the miller boy's mock heroics in 'Die böse Farbe', tiptoeing around 'Der Jäger' and much of 'Eifersucht und Stolz'. Stefan Vladar – a fellow Sony

artist in the '90s – offers piano-playing that is fluent but also often undercharacterised. Articulation, on a rather ploddy Yamaha, is not always ideally clean: compare his horn calls in 'Die böse Farbe' with those of Helmut Deutsch on the earlier recording. Vladar's businesslike manner often feels, in the faster numbers, like a reflection of Skovhus's slight breathlessness – metaphorical and otherwise.

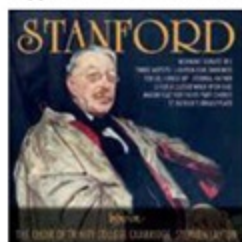
The recording is at its best in the more introspective numbers, where the baritone's manner takes on a moving, world-weary quality: he is beguiling still in 'Morgengruss' and touching in both 'Die liebe Farbe' and 'Der Müller und der Bach'. Skovhus is a serious, experienced artist and I'm sure his *Schöne Müllerin* would be well worth experiencing live. Entering a packed catalogue, though, this disc might best serve primarily as a memento of such an event. **Hugo Shirley**

Stanford



Eternal Father, Op 135 No 2. Fantasia and Toccata, Op 57. For lo, I raise up, Op 145. Lighten our darkness. Magnificat, Op 164. O for a closer walk with God, Op 113 No 6b. St Patrick's Breastplate. Te Deum, Benedictus and Jubilate, Op 115. Three Motets, Op 38

The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge / Stephen Layton with Alexander Hamilton, Owain Park org. Trinity Brass
Hyperion © CDA68174 (81' • DDD • T)



If a disc of sacred Victoriana conjures images of kid gloves and more-tea-vicar, then this is the recording to banish them once and for all. Tea cups are shattered along with prim liturgical proprieties in a recording that reclaims this repertoire as the full-blooded Christian battle cry that it is.

Recordings of Stanford's great choral anthems are not short on the ground, but if any choir has justification to return to them it's Trinity Cambridge. Many of Stanford's works were written for the chapel where he was organist, and to hear pieces like the *Three Latin Motets* performed in situ adds an extra level of interest. To hear the accompanied works recorded in Hereford Cathedral complete with the mighty Father Willis organ is a bonus.

We start in Hereford, with a sensational (in the truest sense) performance of *For lo! I raise up*. Layton's choir rides the surging waves of the organ part (played by Owain Park) with ease, bringing rhetorical clarity to the colourful text from Habbakuk and mining full dramatic potential from the

anthem's episodic contrasts. Drama is also at the fore in *Lighten our darkness* and Stanford's joyous Bach-homage of a *Magnificat*, whose shifting moods and textures are clearly delineated in this breathless performance. It's in works like these that Layton's mixed-voice choir (complete with one of the most full-bodied top lines of the Oxbridge college choirs) really scores compared to rival recordings by the choral foundations of St John's and New College, with their treble top lines.

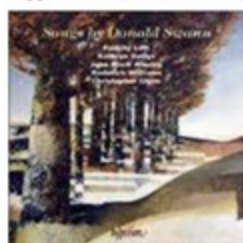
The lovely *Three Latin Motets* emerge cleanly, with as little preciousness as possible. 'Justorum animae' is positively matter-of-fact, while 'Beati quorum via' is delicate but never anaemic. Layton even manages to keep sentimentality at bay through *O for a closer walk with God* and the rather limp C major *Benedictus*. By taking the music seriously, treating it with respect but not reverence, he gives it a freshness calculated to disarm even the staunchest of musical non-believers. **Alexandra Coghlan**

Swann

Songs

Dame Felicity Lott sop Kathryn Rudge mez
John Mark Ainsley ten Roderick Williams bar
Christopher Glynn pf

Hyperion © CDA68172 (121' • DDD • T)



This is the other, virtually unknown side of Donald Swann, remembered so fondly

for his partnership with Michael Flanders. Here is Swann in what he called his 'Lieder style'. Very classical and serious – and hard to pin down, such is the diversity of influences at work in what is, however, an unmistakably English voice, one in the tradition of Quilter, Butterworth and, most especially, Britten. What is surprising among his settings of poets as diverse as Burns, Blake and Byron, Rilke, Hesse and Heine is that there is little evidence of Swann the memorable melodist, the composer of 'Slow train', one of the most evocative English songs ever written. The strophic form of most Flanders & Swann songs inspired tunes. Here he is concerned with words, the text leading the texture.

This is a collection to dip into, not, I would suggest, to be heard at one fell swoop. The appeal of each song must be a matter of personal taste. I found myself drawn far more to the earlier ones – 'Dark rose of my heart' (words by Francis Scarfe) is an impassioned spine-tingler that reduced me to tears, 'A red, red rose' (Burns) a touching alternative

to the traditional setting – less so to the later ones with their solemn texts, much concerned with death and dying, and their austere and even dissonant accompaniments.

The *Six Songs to Poems by William Blake* could almost be Britten/Pears pastiches, and you will have a happy time with Roderick Williams and John Mark Ainsley if that world appeals. Some settings don't work. Betjeman's 'A Subaltern's Love Song' ('Miss Joan Hunter-Dunn') is robbed of all its essential *joie de vivre* by Swann's setting, not helped by the microphone placement. Pottin Hall's acoustic is made far too swimmy for such intimate, word-focused miniatures, though improving adjustments were clearly made over the three different sessions to reduce this effect (Dame Felicity and Kathryn Rudge are the main beneficiaries) and with the piano less separated from the singer. In addition, many of the songs' codas demand full-throttle delivery in the upper registers (especially for the men). This can become wearisome.

Despite these reservations, however, this is a continually fascinating and diverse selection of 46 songs (from over 600) which recitalists and Lieder lovers will lap up, for there are many buried treasures here. The real star of the show is Christopher Glynn, for whom the project has evidently been a labour of love. The detail and colour of his playing (to say nothing of the way he meets the many technical challenges Swann presents with a knowing wink) in the more than two hours of accompaniments is a fine achievement. If that were not enough, he also contributes a first-class (English only) booklet which comes with all the song texts. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Telemann

Reformations-Oratorium,
'Holder Friede, heil'ger Glaube'

Regula Mühlemann sop Daniel Johansen ten
Benjamin Appl bar Stephan MacLeod bass-bar
Bavarian Radio Chorus; Bavarian Chamber
Philharmonic Orchestra / Reinhard Goebel
Sony Classical © 88985 37387-2 (61' • DDD • T/T)



Celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation are throwing up some interesting releases, including this curiosity: a world premiere recording of *Holder Friede, heil'ger Glaube*, a Reformation oratorio by Telemann newly discovered by conductor Reinhard Goebel. Composed in 1755 (the same year, incidentally, as his



'Seductive': Christiane Karg's recital on Berlin Classics 'examines erotic yearning and regret' – see review on page 78

better-known Passion oratorio *Der Tod Jesu*), *Holder Friede* is a similarly attractive late work, embracing elements of the new style of CPE Bach.

Barely an hour long, the oratorio's concision is accounted for by the sermon that would have divided parts 1 and 2. Cut free from this liturgical weight, the work is a contemplative affair structured as an allegorical dialogue between Religion, Peace, Devotion and History (roles taken, respectively, by bass, soprano, tenor and baritone soloists), with the chorus providing the voice of the Christian faithful. It's not a form or a libretto calculated to generate great drama, and the musical results are correspondingly moderate.

There's no overture or sinfonia to provide preamble, so the music launches straight in with a duet – the graceful 'Holder Friede' – in which Peace (Regula Mühlemann) and Religion (Benjamin Appl) celebrate their new intimacy. Obligato flutes bill and coo in sympathetic affection with the young soloists, and the whole lilts along nicely enough under Goebel's direction. But, setting the tone for the whole recording, there's a sense of music leaning back in its seat rather than reaching out to demand attention.

Period precision and politeness seem insufficient for Stephan MacLeod's aria 'Ihr werdet gedrungen', with its threats of dungeons, torture and flames, while the weapons of Appl's 'Schau, das sind meine Waffen' are similarly blunt. Mühlemann's treble-like soprano finds the affirmation but not the anxiety in 'So hart bei den Klippen', and tenor Daniel Johanness – so expressive and Evangelist-like in his recitative – tends to the mannered in arias.

The chorus provide clean, crisply articulated chorales and a rather splendid fugal finale, but it's too little too late. While *Holder Friede* is an interesting and opportune discovery, Goebel's recording sells it short. A little more life and a little less respect might have made all the difference. **Alexandra Coghlan**

Weeks

Mala punica^a. *Walled Garden*^b

^aExaudi; ^bHortus Ensemble / James Weeks
Winter & Winter © 910 239-2 (54' • DDD)



Brian Eno once argued that experimental composers are

by instinct gardeners, who plant musical seeds that evolve into complex systems minded to grow beyond their control, as opposed to modern composition 'architects' who, like a Boulez or a Babbitt, draw up definitive designs which performers must follow to the letter.

The British composer James Weeks, 40 next year, falls equidistant between these two polarities. His *Mala punica* (2008-09) is intricately organised note-on-note. Eight solo voices sing a set of eight compositions that, as he explains, 'channel the canon's intrinsic momentum in different ways'. But encasing this vocal music, and interweaving through its veins, is another composition, written six years later. *Walled Garden*, for two alto flutes, bass flute and string trio, becomes like fertile soil or clay in which we hear *Mala punica* grow – and the concern is not just the counterpoint of note against note or of phrases shadowed, it's the counterpoint of one composition set in motion against another.

Weeks has organised music like this before. His 2013 *Métier* release 'Tide' combined three stand-alone instrumental works entitled *Burnham Air*, *Tide* and *Sky* so that their 'components [were] not so much simultaneous but coexistent', as he noted. And in this latest work a similarly

pleasing symmetry between form and content stitches intentions to sound. Weeks sets texts from the Song of Songs, his canonic structures symbolising the imagery of flowers blooming, gardens of lilies and a vine mutating into dense foliage, and his exquisite ear for luminous, ecstatic harmony expresses itself without needing to rely on hardy perennial stock sequences.

Weeks's own Exaudi vocal ensemble is joined by the Hortus Ensemble in an immaculately detailed performance where each line carries weight and audibly contributes to the whole. The danger might arise, I suppose, that the evolving overlap between the two compositions begins to override our intrinsic interest in the pieces themselves. But through careful cultivating, mixed with an openness to letting his material run wild, Weeks proves himself both expert architect and gardener.

Philip Clark

'El Amor brujo'

Excerpts from Falla *El Amor brujo*

plus music by Cantemir, Rodrigo,

D Scarlatti, Tárrega and Traditional

Euskal Baroque Ensemble / Enrike Solinís *gtr/lavta*

Alia Vox © AV9921 (57' • DDD)



'A symbolic celebration of the 140th anniversary of the birth of

Manuel de Falla' is how Jordi Savall, in a booklet note, describes this curious disc, issued by his own label, though the performers are a rather fine Basque ensemble, whose work, effectively crossing disciplines, is reminiscent of Christina Pluhar's *L'Arpeggiata*. Its aim is to contextualise Falla by presenting us with an arrangement, by the group's guitarist-director Enrike Solinís, of *El Amor brujo*, its numbers interspersed with works by composers who influenced him (Tárrega, the Baroque Cantemir with his Oriental flourishes) and whom he influenced in turn (Rodrigo). Two of Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas are included as a nod to Falla's admiration for Wanda Landowska, for whom his Harpsichord Concerto was written. Central to the project is the flamenco singer María José Pérez, for whom much of the music is recomposed, and the whole has been provided with a new text, based on *El Amor brujo*'s original narrative, by the writer María Lejárraga.

You either like it or you don't. There's no doubting the enthusiasm of the performers or the frequent brilliance of the playing. The sound, dominated by guitars,

sackbut and an almost guttural low flute can in itself be attractive, above all in Cantemir's *Bestengiar*, new to me and utterly beguiling. Solinís himself is a real virtuoso, and Pérez delivers the vocals with a sexy, earthy tone and tremendous flamboyance. Whether it serves the music, however, is a different matter. Rewritten for a small ensemble, The 'Ritual Fire Dance' loses its clout when placed beside the familiar orchestration or Falla's own piano version. The sinister enchantment of the 'Círculo mágico' is dampened by the lengthy narration that Pérez speaks over it. You may find the vocal revamping of the central movement of the *Concierto de Aranjuez* downright strange. It's all an acquired taste – not mine, it has to be said, though you may think differently. Tim Ashley

'Pange lingua'

'Music for Corpus Christi'

Bairstow Let all mortal flesh keep silence Byrd

Cibavit eos Finzi Lo, the full, final sacrifice Grier

Panis angelicus Josquin Missa Pange lingua

La Rue O salutaris hostia Messiaen O sacrum

convivium Plainsong Pange lingua gloriosa

G Ross Ave verum corpus Victoria Lauda Sion

salvatore Villette O sacrum convivium

Choir of Clare College, Cambridge / Graham Ross

with Michael Papadopoulos *org*

Harmonia Mundi © HMM90 7688 (75' • DDD • T/t)



The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, directed by Graham Ross, explore music

for Corpus Christi through the hymns of Saint Thomas Aquinas. The programme forms part of their series of music for the liturgical year and traces a long arc from Josquin to the present including works by Victoria, Bairstow and Messiaen.

Josquin's *Missa Pange lingua* is sung tenderly with a bright, luminous tone. These young singers display an impressive sense of style but there are a few awkwardly metrical moments where the bar lines of modern notation pervade their phrasing. The 'Pleni sunt caeli' duet is beautifully executed despite several overly manicured dynamic contrasts. Although I prefer fewer voices in Josquin's polyphony, this is one of the best choral performances of this Mass on record.

There is little doubt that this choir has an enviable appetite for 20th-century music and they are at their strongest in the two French settings of *O sacrum convivium* by Villette and Messiaen. Following this, Francis Grier's atmospheric setting of *Panis angelicus*, in memory of musicologist and conductor David Trendell, is something

of a show-stopper. Lower voices form a rich, sonorous drone chord, from which the tentrils of solo soprano and tenor lines rise in a manner redolent of incense. In particular, the light, buoyant bloom of Alice Halstead's soprano is spellbinding and I would suggest that she is a voice to listen out for. Embedded in this programme are two very Anglican works: Bairstow's *Let all mortal flesh keep silence* and Finzi's magnificent *Lo, the full, final sacrifice*. They are majestically performed but make awkward bedfellows for their unaccompanied, Latin-texted colleagues.

Edward Breen

'Parfum'

Britten *Quatre Chansons françaises*

Debussy/Adams *Le livre de Baudelaire*

Duparc *L'invitation au voyage*. Phidylé. *La vie*

antérieure Koechlin *Épiphanie*, Op 17 No 3

Ravel *Shéhérazade*

Christiane Karg *sop*

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra / David Afkham

Berlin Classics © 0300832BC (75' • DDD • T/t)



'Like the aroma of a costly perfume that evaporates and leaves behind it just a hint of

elegance' is how Christiane Karg describes the mood of her disc of Francophone orchestral songs in order to explain its title. She's being discreet, since this beautifully programmed if full-on recital examines erotic yearning and regret within the wider context of the relationship between innocence and adult knowledge.

Shéhérazade, 'Épiphanie' and the Duparc songs hanker after sensual experiences beyond the here and now. The Debussy/Adams *Livre de Baudelaire*, world-wearily meditating on desire and tristesse, is tellingly placed alongside the teenage Britten's *Quatre Chansons françaises*, which contain in embryo the emotional landscapes of his mature work.

Much of it is beautifully done, though *Shéhérazade*, with which Karg opens, isn't quite on the same level as the rest of it. Interpretatively she's strong, delivering the cycle with the studied awareness of one who knows how to 'interrompre le conte avec art', as the text puts it. The recording itself, however, places her voice very close, presumably to emphasise the careful dynamic gradations of her soft singing, though it also captures an occasional pulse in the sound and an uncharacteristic thinness of tone in her lower registers.

Thereafter, however, the balance becomes less artificial and Karg's voice



Sophie Bevan, with The Mozartists and Ian Page, recording Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven for Signum

is allowed to emerge in its splendour and fullness. 'Épiphanie' is exquisitely poised and her Duparc urgent rather than languid: the rush of excitement at the climax of 'La vie antérieure' is unusual, though apt. *Le livre de Baudelaire* burns with a dark, flagrant sincerity, while the Britten, gazing querulously towards adulthood, has a touching grace. The Bamberg Symphony are on fine form for David Afkham, too. Wayward speeds again hamper *Shéhérazade*, though the clarinets at the start of 'Asie' sound very seductive. And Adams's slippery, troubling orchestrations, gliding away from genuine Debussy towards Wagner and even early Schoenberg, are illuminated with superb finesse.

Tim Ashley

'Perfido!'

Beethoven Ah! perfido, Op 65. No, non turbati... Ma tu tremi, o mio tesoro?, WoO92a **Haydn** Scena di Berenice, HobXXIVa:10. Solo e pensoso, HobXXIVb:20 **Mozart** Ah, lo prevedi...Ah, t'invola agl'occhi miei, K272. Basta, vincesti...Ah, non lasciarmi, no, K486a/295a. Bella mia fiamma... Resta, o cara, K528. Oh, temerario Arbace... Per quel paterno amplesso, K79

Sophie Bevan sop The Mozartists / Ian Page
Signum © SIGCD485 (70' • DDD • T/T)



All three composers represented here were active in opera but these scenes and arias were composed as stand-alone works and represent a side of each man's activities that doesn't so often get an outing. The music ranges from the child Mozart, based in London in 1764-65, to Haydn, also in London three decades later, and Beethoven, in perhaps the most famous of these scenas.

Although divorced from their operatic settings, there is still drama to be divined in these works, and Sophie Bevan doesn't sell any of them short. She is, of course, hugely experienced in the music of this period and brings a characteristically vivid intensity to each piece, tempered by an endearing touch of breathiness in the voice. The Mozartists are a brand-new spin-off from Ian Page's Classical Opera company and accompany with sensitivity and a welcome graininess to

the string tone, which contrasts with the sleekness cultivated by some Continental ensembles.

Ab! perfido is not uncommon on disc and there are a number of collections of Mozart's concert arias. Haydn less so: his wonderful *Solo e pensoso* appeared on Vol 3 of Giovanni Antonini's nascent symphony cycle (Alpha, 5/17), sung by Francesca Aspromonte with a winning purity that offers a subtly different outlook to Bevan's on the piece. Bernarda Fink took on the *Scena di Berenice* on a disc featuring Symphonies Nos 91 and 92 with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra under René Jacobs (Harmonia Mundi, 5/04) – one of the finest Haydn discs made in the run-up to the anniversary year of 2009; Fink winds up the drama even further than Bevan but Jacobs's imaginative accompanimental touches are something else again.

David Threasher

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

REISSUES

Rob Cowan on a great conductor, celebrated half a century after his death

André Cluytens recalled

'The most French of Belgian conductors or the most Belgian of French conductors?'

François Laurent's meaningful quandary, expressed in the context of his perceptive booklet note (and quoted above), immediately sets the tone. If there's one thing that this magnificent collection proves beyond doubt it is that both as a man and as an artist André Cluytens (1905-67) was a mass of contradictions. Born into a family of musicians, young 'Augustin' started out as a violinist, gained his piano diploma (he was widely lauded as a pianist) and made his highly successful conducting debut in 1926. The opera house was his initial stamping ground. One of his wartime positions was as principal conductor at the Vichy Opera House (the Casino de Vichy) and therein lies the first major contradiction. After the war Cluytens was condemned to 'national degradation' for what was his 'deplorable attitude' regarding the Germans and for having made pro-German statements. Then again any disciplinary measures were lifted on account of services rendered to the Resistance. This surprisingly even-handed biographical balance sheet is mirrored almost exactly by Cluytens' mode of making music and it's as well that we now have the whole run of his orchestral and concerto recordings at our disposal as evidence.

The truth is that there is no blanket Cluytens 'style'. Take, by way of an initial example, his Beethoven, starting with the two *Pastoral* Symphony recordings, both with the Berlin Philharmonic, one in mono from 1955, the other in stereo from 1960. Although the two first movements clock up an almost identical timing, the earlier version is the more taut in execution, especially around the rhythmically propulsive development section. The later 'Scene by the Brook' is more relaxed than its predecessor by more than a minute, an almost Impressionist traversal, the transition from 'The Storm' to 'The

Shepherd's Song' gently poetic. And there's the *Choral*, as strikingly 'Furtwänglerian' as any since. With matching tempos for the first movement, Cluytens like Furtwängler cues the primeval mists of time for the opening, the semiquavers more like a Bruckner *tremolando* (which makes nonsense of their return later on in the movement). Parallel episodes abound, but it's a moving performance, well recorded.

'The truth is that there is no blanket Cluytens "style".'

Among various 'first releases' and 'first releases on CD' comes Handel's *Water Music* in Harty's arrangement – not terribly interesting – and a previously unpublished 1955 Beethoven First Piano Concerto with Emil Gilels, horribly aggressive in places, the *Allegro scherzando* finale sounding more like an *Allegro furioso*. Other collaborations with Gilels include Beethoven's Third Concerto (though I prefer Cluytens' later, stereo version with Gabriel Tacchino, where there's much more light and shade), and outstanding recordings of Saint-Saëns Second and Rachmaninov's Third Concertos, the latter suggesting an interpretative route already paved by Horowitz, even by the composer himself. It's good to see Menotti's brightly neoclassical F major Piano Concerto reissued, the soloist Yuri Boukoff, the coupling Serge Nigg's rather more gritty First Piano Concerto, with Pierre Barbizet doing the honours.

Monique de la Bruchollerie's imposing 1943 take on Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, her first recording and a first 'official' release, has already appeared ('unofficially', one presumes) in Melo Classic's dazzling nine-disc 100th Anniversary set (MC1034) but sits equally



well in the present context, and the vintage high standard is maintained by Marcelle Meyer in Richard Strauss's *Burleske* and Jeanne-Marie Darré in Chopin's *Andante spianato and Grande polonaise*, a performance worthy of comparison with Horowitz (who plays only the solo piano version). That same CD (disc three) also includes an exceptional account of Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat Suite* (another CD 'first'), where 'The Miller's Dance' is pert and cumulatively thrilling. Solomon in Beethoven Piano Concertos Nos 2 and 4 is of course de rigueur and there's an unexpected bonus in a lively version of Chabrier's *España*, never before released, and edited especially for this set. But why no more Chabrier from Cluytens, I wonder, the *Suite pastorale*, *Bourrée fantasque* or *Gwendoline Overture*? Also worthy of mention is Marguerite Long's patient account of Chopin's Second Piano Concerto (in André Messager's re-orchestration). We might also have had Alfred Cortot in the Schumann Piano Concerto (passed for release by the pianist) but apparently the evidence has fistfuls of wrong notes, so it remains languishing in the EMI/Warner Classics archives. Still, how I'd love to hear it.

Although the majority of recordings included hail from Paris, other European orchestras are also involved. A Vienna Philharmonic programme devoted to Strauss and Smetana (the two most popular movements from *Má vlast*) is issued in stereo for the first time but disappoints, *Don Juan* taking time to settle and with a lugubrious polka in 'From Bohemia's Woods and Fields'. Also near the beginning of 'Vltava' the horns are indistinct though things perk up for the 'St John's Rapids'. From Berlin, also in stereo, comes a sumptuously recorded Schubert *Unfinished* though its rougher-grained mono Paris Conservatoire



André Cluytens conducted, and recorded with, many of Europe's finest orchestras

predecessor is the more interesting performance, especially in the way Cluytens marks the contrasting moods of the two movements. Two Schumann symphonies are included, the *Rhenish* and, less familiar, the Fourth, which is fairly fast and bullish, the same disc including a typically eloquent account of the Cello Concerto with André Navarra.

There are four Haydn symphonies, all fairly well done (Nos 45, 94, 96 and 104) and some impressive Wagner selections, including a stereo *Meistersinger* Overture that right from its opening bars will pin you to the wall. Cluytens was always at home with Russian music. I was amused to read that the recordings of Shostakovich's two piano concertos with Shostakovich himself at the keyboard were 'recorded in the presence of the composer' (!) and while the then-recent Eleventh Symphony (also recorded with Shostakovich *in situ* as I recall) is evocative – there are times when the Paris orchestra sounds authentically Russian, largely on account of the brass – Cluytens has to face impossibly superior rivals in Mravinsky and Kondrashin. The Romantic Russians are represented by short works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Glinka and Mussorgsky, as well as Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto with Tacchino and, especially hard-hitting, Tchaikovsky's First with Aldo Ciccolini, who also appears in music by Franck and d'Indy.

A CD-premiere programme of Massenet suites, including *Les Erinnyes*, *Scènes*

alsaciennes and *Scènes pittoresques* finds Cluytens virtually on a par with Beecham in terms of charm and the quality of playing he draws from his Paris Opéra and Opéra Comique players. And what a delight to encounter the vintage violin playing of Henri Merckel in Delibes' *Coppélia* Suite (the *Sylvia* Suite is also included). Zino Francescatti is the stylish soloist in Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*, albeit the four-movement version. French music is, needless to say, writ large throughout the set, one of the most remarkable inclusions – another CD 'first release' – being a gripping complete production of Debussy's *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, with both spoken and sung roles performed, the singers including such vocal luminaries of the day as Rita Gorr, Solange Michel, Martha Angelici and Mattiilda Dobbs. Other rarities include Emmanuel Bondeville's symphonic poem *Gaultier-Garguille* (a 17th-century actor), excerpts from his opera *Madame Bovary*, Pierné's *Cydalise et le chèvre-pied* and Delage's lovely *Quatre Poèmes hindous* (exquisitely sung by Martha Angelici); all are well worth getting to know. Good, too, to have Stravinsky's melodrama *Perséphone*, it's just a pity that being an opera *Le Rossignol* didn't qualify for inclusion.

Then there's Cluytens' beloved Ravel, previously available either from Warner themselves or, for many of the earlier recordings, Stewart Brown's Testament label. There are no fewer than four versions of *La valse* included, with the

National Theatre Orchestra of the Opéra-Comique, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Philharmonia and the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, the earliest being the most emotionally catastrophic, the (stereo) Philharmonia version the most luxuriant, and probably the best played.

Of the versions of *Ma Mère l'Oye* that we're given (two of the Suite, one of the complete ballet), the recording of the Suite from 1954, another of the items that is new to CD, strikes me as the most effective, the modulating transition at the close of 'The Fairy Garden' as magical as any I've heard, principally because of the skilful way Cluytens navigates both the phrasing and the music's curvaceous bass-line. I've a special fondness for these earlier Ravel recordings, their wit, tartness and sense of spontaneous engagement; also the distinctive sound of the French Radio National Orchestra, especially the vibrant brass, reedy oboes, and mellifluous flutes and clarinets while the strings harbour just a hint of pre-war Parisian orchestras about them. That said, the later versions are also distinctive and Samson François's versions of the two piano concertos are still probably unmatched. Debussy is well represented, and so are Bizet and Franck.

As to the remaining French repertoire, there's much Berlioz, the *Symphonie fantastique* of course as well as various overtures, excerpts from *Roméo et Juliette* and *The Damnation of Faust*. Two shots at *L'Enfance du Christ* are included, the later one graced with the superior chorus and sound. The same might be said of Fauré's Requiem although as ever with Cluytens having access to more than one version affords the stimulation of fascinating comparative listening.

For me, the process of sifting through this set – there's plenty more that I haven't the space to mention – approximates the sensation that a child might experience if being let loose in a toy shop. So much to savour, so much variety, the work of a musician whose prodigious gifts shed light on virtually every piece he turned his hand to. And while it's true that not everything featured here scales the heights, there's not much that doesn't, and for about £100 this 65-disc set is a real snip. But be warned, these collections tend to have a relatively short shelf life so do yourself a favour and snatch it up while you can. You're likely to regret it if you don't. **G**

THE RECORDING

André Cluytens: The Complete Orchestral & Concerto Recordings

Erato © (65 discs) 9029 58866-9

GRAMOPHONE's *Long Weekend* at *Schloss Elmau*

Specialist music tour to Germany
28th September – 3rd October 2017

Master Travel is proud to partner with *Gramophone* to offer classical music lovers the chance to experience a long weekend of world-class performances at the luxurious spa retreat of Schloss Elmau, Germany.

Framed by the dramatic peaks of the Bavarian Alps, this is an oasis of calm, just 100km from Munich. This is the ideal setting to listen to the likes of the Pavel Haas Quartet, Benjamin Appl and Kirill Gerstein.

We invite you to feast on outstanding food and world-class music-making - to relax, breathe deep and discover.

Highlights include:

- 5 nights accommodation at the 5* Schloss Elmau Luxury Spa and Cultural Hideaway
- Tickets to 5 nights of performances listed below
- Breakfast and dinner in one of the 6 restaurants at the retreat
- Use of all wellness and spa facilities
- Exclusive *Gramophone* meet and greet sessions with artists

Concert Programme:

- Thursday 28th September – **Pavel Haas Quartet**
- Friday 29th September – **Benjamin Appl and James Baillieu** followed by 'In Conversation' and **presentation of their new album 'Heimat'** (in English)
- Saturday 30th September – **Christa Ludwig in Conversation** (in German)
- Sunday 1st October – **Joanne Lunn & Roger Vignoles**
- Monday 2nd October – **Kirill Gerstein**

The above programme can be tailor-made to your requirements: phone us on 020 7501 6741 to discuss further or email us: tours@mastertravel.co.uk

www.mastertravel.co.uk



Tour price

excluding travel to/from Germany:

£1,640 per person

Early bird booking: £1,540 per person

Valid only on bookings before 1st June 2017

Secure your place with a **£350 deposit**, with the remaining payment to be made 45 days prior to departure.

We would be delighted to arrange your travel to/from Germany if you wish. Please contact the Master Travel office for current prices/availability: **+44 20 7501 6741** or **tours@mastertravel.co.uk**

Cost includes:

- 5 nights accommodation at the 5* Schloss Elmau Luxury Spa and Cultural Hideaway
- Breakfast
- Dinner in one of the 6 restaurants at the retreat ("dine around voucher" of 50€/person/dinner)
- Use of all wellness and spa facilities
- Concert tickets included in the programme above

- Exclusive *Gramophone* meet and greet sessions with artists
- Pre-departure information

Cost excludes:

- International flights to/from Germany
- Lunch
- Drinks, snacks and any other purchases of a personal nature
- Travel insurance and any visas required to enter Germany
- Anything not specified in the inclusions above

The above programme can be tailor-made to your requirements: phone us on **+44 20 7501 6741** to discuss further or email us: **tours@mastertravel.co.uk**

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST FORM

I would like to book (no.) places on *Gramophone's* Long Weekend at Schloss Elmau 28th September – 3rd October 2017
Single Room required? Yes/No

Personal details

Name on passport:

Address:

Mobile telephone number:

Home telephone number:

Email address:

Declaration by the applicant

Signature

Date.....

This form should be returned to Master Travel Ltd, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London, SE24 0PB
Tel: +44(0)20 7501 6741 Email: tours@mastertravel.co.uk
Web: www.mastertravel.co.uk



MASTER TRAVEL
LIMITED

Opera



Tim Ashley listens to Ravel's sardonic *L'heure espagnole*:

'Rhythms pulse and throb, and the Hispanic turns of melody often have a pointed suavity that hints at innuendo' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 86**



Hugo Shirley on Parsifal from Sir Mark Elder and the Hallé:

'Elder's single-minded patience creates a powerful and quietly hypnotic sense of weary sadness' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 88**

G Benjamin

Into the Little Hill^a. Dream of the Song^b. Flight^c

^aHila Plitmann sop ^aSusan Bickley contr ^bBejun Mehta countertenor ^cMichael Cox fl ^bNetherlands Chamber Choir; ^aLondon Sinfonietta; ^bRoyal Concertgebouw Orchestra / George Benjamin

Nimbus © NI5964 (64' • DDD)

Recorded live at the ^aQueen Elizabeth Hall, London, May 12, 2012; ^bConcertgebouw, Amsterdam, September 25-26, 2015

^bFrom RCO Live RCO16003 (7/16)

Includes texts and translation



Nimbus's latest George Benjamin disc has no unrecorded works but does make a rounded

and absorbing programme. Good to have a second version of *Into the Little Hill* (2006), the 'lyric tale' that was his first opera and whose darkly ironic take on the Pied Piper legend is more topical than a decade ago. The earlier account has more subtly complemented singers, but Hila Plitmann and Susan Bickley evince drama and intimacy aplenty in their multiple roles and Benjamin draws a superfine response from the London Sinfonietta in fastidious scoring (basset-horns and cornets prominent) that greatly enhances the mesmeric aura.

Less a song-cycle than a scena, *Dream of the Song* (2015) juxtaposes verse by 11th-century Spanish poets sung (in English) by countertenor with extracts by Lorca sung (in Spanish) by female chorus: this contrast in medium is paralleled by an orchestration where two oboes and four horns are joined by strings and percussion. The piece unfolds as an intensifying arch in which the chorus's distanced entry builds to the climactic fourth section, before taking on a new-found repose in the eloquent then ecstatic final sections. Bejun Mehta is as restrained yet as ardent as the music requires, with the Dutch musicians responsive to Benjamin's direction.

This reading has also been issued on an anthology in the Concertgebouw's Horizon series but was worth including in this

collection. Rounded off by *Flight* (1979), a homage to Debussy and Varèse ethereally played by Michael Cox, this is a welcome addition to the Benjamin discography in anticipation of his new stage work for the Royal Opera next year. **Richard Whitehouse**

Into the Little Hill – comparative version:

Ollu (11/08) (NIMB) NI5828 (11/08)

CH Graun

Armida – A tanti pianti miei; La Gloria **Britannico** – Mi paventi il figlio indegno **Coriolano** – Senza di te, mio Bene **Iphigenia in Aulis** – Sforzero **Il Mithridate** – Piangete **L'Orfeo** – Il mir s'inalza e fremo; D'ogni aura al mormorar; Sento una pena **Rodelinda, regina de' Langobardi** – Sinfonia **Silla** – No, no, di Libia fra l'arene; Parmi...ah no!

Julia Lezhneva sop

Concerto Köln / Mikhail Antonenko

Decca © 483 1518 (65' • DDD)

Includes texts and translations



The name Carl Heinrich Graun won't be familiar to many opera-goers – or

indeed many singers. He was Kapellmeister to Frederick the Great, writing in full *opera seria* style à la Handel. Soprano Julia Lezhneva came across an aria from Graun's *Britannico* at Potsdam's Sanssouci Palace. 'I felt myself trembling when I sang it', she comments in the booklet note to her latest disc, a Graun extravaganza where every number apart from *Britannico*'s 'Mi paventi' receives its premiere recording.

It seems that Graun was much enamoured of the soprano voice at a time when, for Handel and Porpora at least, the castrato still reigned supreme. I'm not sure Graun would have been totally enamoured with Lezhneva's performances though. Most of the arias are highly virtuosic – and there's no denying Lezhneva's got a precision-drilled technique to tackle the highly florid coloratura – but some of her artistic decisions are questionable.

In operas on familiar themes from mythology or Roman history – Rinaldo,

Armida, Orfeo (three arias), Ifigenia in Aulide, Lucio Silla – there's a fair amount of lamenting and *furioso* raging going on...and in trying to inject plenty of drama, Lezhneva sometimes scoops and slides in terribly ungainly fashion. Just try listening to the disc's opening track, Aspasia's aria 'Sento una pena' from *L'Orfeo*; all the pyrotechnics are there, but the extravagant swell on the word 'rancore' is horribly mannered and unmusical. While there's much to admire in Lezhneva's remarkable agility, her soprano can be pallid and pinched. She's at her best in Aristeo's moving 'D'ogni aura al mormorar' from *L'Orfeo*.

Graun certainly gave his sopranos a good workout, but the effect of the 11 arias makes for an exhausting listen. The fiery sinfonia from *Rodelinda* offers an all too brief respite, the playing of Concerto Köln bristling with excitement and plenty of heavy lute-strumming. I'd welcome a recording of a complete opera by Graun but there are times when this operatic recital is simply too much. **Mark Pullinger**

Lully

Armide

Marie-Adeline Henry sop.....Armide

Antonio Figueroa ten.....Renaud

Judith van Wanroij sop.... La Gloire/Phénice/Mélisse

Marie-Claude Chappuis mez.....

..... La Sagesse/Sidonie/Lucinde

Douglas Williams bass-bar.....Hidraot

Marc Mauillon ten.....Aronte

Etienne Bazola bar.....Ubalde

Emiliano Gonzalez Toro ten.....Artémidore

Cyril Auvity ten.....Danish Knight

Namur Chamber Choir; Les Talens Lyriques /

Christophe Rousset

Aparté ② AP135 (149' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Philharmonie, Paris,

December 10, 2015

Includes synopsis, text and translation



Armide (1686) was the last collaboration between Lully



'Among Lully's most beautiful creations': Marie-Adeline Henry as Armide in an outstanding live performance from Les Talens Lyriques and Christophe Rousset

and the librettist Quinault. Considered by contemporaries as the perfect exemplar of Lulliste *tragédie en musique*, it concentrates on the inward and outward dilemmas of the central character modelled after Tasso's infatuated enchantress Armida, whose obsessive love for the bewitched crusader Rinaldo turns to vengeful fury when he is cured of her spell and tries to extricate himself from her. Christophe Rousset's crisply detailed concert performance at the Philharmonie de Paris in December 2015 yields the finest recorded version yet. The charming prologue is more obliquely allegorical compared to some blatantly sycophantic examples in other Lully operas; sopranos Glory (Judith van Wanroij) and Wisdom (Marie-Claude Chappuis) discuss their influence over an unnamed hero (obviously Louis XIV), and elicit polished responses from the Namur Chamber Choir. Les Talens Lyriques play with consummate mastery of elegantly swaying *inégales*, fizzy brilliance or suave dancelike gestures as each moment in Lully's score demands; the assorted dances and divertissements are moulded exquisitely under Rousset's sagacious direction from the harpsichord.

High tenor Antonio Figueroa sings Renaud idiomatically and sweetly in the

pastoral sleep scene that forms the bulk of Act 2 ('Plus j'observe ces lieux, et plus je les admire'); this ranks among Lully's most beautiful creations and has even greater compositional finesse and flexibility of form than the *sommeil* in *Atys*. The blissfulness of demons disguised as nymphs and shepherds laying enchanted garlands of flowers on the sleeping hero is disturbed by the violent transition into the titular sorceress's anguished monologue 'Enfin il est en ma puissance', in which she cannot bring herself to stab to death the slumbering Renaud: Marie-Adeline Henry captures the full measure of Armide's conflicting emotions, and the undercurrent of theatrical tensions produced by Rousset and his band indicates why Rameau judged this sensational music to be worthy of analytical praise in his 1754 *Observations*.

Unremitting tension continues in Act 3: Armide's guilt that Renaud's love is illusory causes her to invoke Hatred (sung menacingly by Marc Mauillon), only to change her mind at the climax of an extraordinary *ombra* divertissement in which Hatred, male chorus and dancers attempt to break Cupid's bows and arrows.

The respite provided by the lighter tone and entertaining magical mischief of Act 4

is judged charmingly as two Christian knights fend off seductive demons in order to come to Renaud's rescue (there is especially fine singing from Cyril Auvity's Danish Knight and Marie-Claude Chappuis as a demon impersonating his beloved Lucinde). The long *passacaille* for the Pleasures and 'a band of fortunate lovers' (Act 5) must have inspired the corresponding passacaglia in Purcell's *King Arthur* a few years later; its sensually shaded performance by Auvity, the Namur Chamber Choir and Les Talens Lyriques demonstrates Lully's art at its most appealing. **David Vickers**

Mayr

Telemaco

Siri Karoline Thornhill *sop*..... Telemaco
 Andrea Lauren Brown *sop*..... Calipso
 Jaewon Yun *sop*..... Eucari
 Markus Schäfer *ten*..... Mentore
 Katharina Ruckgaber *sop*..... Priest of Venus
 Niklas Mallmann *bass*..... Priest of Bacchus
 Members of the Bavarian State Opera Chorus;
 Simon Mayr Chorus; Concerto de Bassus /
 Franz Hauk
 Naxos ® 2 8 660388/9 (136' • DDD)
 Includes synopsis; Italian libretto available from
 naxos.com



Premiered at La Fenice in 1797, when Venice was occupied by Napoleon's troops,

Simon Mayr's take on the Telemachus-Calypso legend crosses Italian *opera seria* with the French fashion for dance interludes and choral tableaux. Mozart had done likewise with *Idomeneo*, though there the similarity ends. *Telemaco* certainly has its moments. Mayr's melodic invention can beguile, as in Telemachus's cavatina as he succumbs to the island's enchanted landscape, or the graceful, rather Gluckian minuet chorus in Act 2. And while his scoring, unlike Mozart's, rarely enhances the drama, his writing for flutes, clarinets and horns, especially, is typically colourful and lavish (Rossini praised Mayr for 'using the instruments with abandon, rather than with diffidence according to the rules').

There are moments of theatrical intensity, too, as in the ensemble where Mentore – a figure akin to Virtue in Baroque allegories – rails against Calypso's cult of hedonism. But dramatic momentum is never sustained, due partly to Antonio Sografi's creaky libretto, partly to the irredeemable amiability of Mayr's musical personality. Many a movement promises more than it ultimately delivers, not least the distraught Calypso's final aria, which begins with a potentially fruitful Gluckian ostinato but soon tips into *buffo* cheerfulness – the work's default mode. In his finest operas, including *Medea in Corinto* and *La Lodoiska*, Mayr can build whole scenes to an effective climax. Here his instincts are to decorate rather than dramatise. In the Act 2 finale, the tension of the encounter between the lovelorn Calypso and the vacillating Telemachus is fatally undermined by music more apt to a comic Singspiel, complete with twittering flute solos.

Still, if you accept *Telemaco* primarily as a polished vocal-instrumental concert, there's plenty to enjoy in this latest offering in Naxos's Mayr series using forces from the composer's native Bavaria. Franz Hauk directs his trim period band with style and affection, though rhythms can sometimes jog where something hungrier would have been welcome. Of the soloists, the standout is Siri Karoline Thornhill in what was originally a soprano castrato role. She dispatches her coloratura with grace and panache, and characterises Telemachus's unenviable plight as much as Mayr's decorous idiom allows. Andrea Lauren Brown's slenderer soprano has the agility

for Calypso's music, and she sings her charming Act 2 love song alluringly. A more sulphurous chest register would have helped mitigate the frivolity of her final aria. As the staunchly moralising Mentore, Markus Schäfer compensates for some reedy tone with his intelligent, incisive delivery; and the sweet-toned young Korean soprano Jaewon Yun makes her mark in the small role of Calypso's confidante Eucari. There is an informative booklet essay and a (reasonably) helpful track-by-track synopsis, though if you do investigate, be warned that the Italian libretto, available online, comes without English translation – frustrating cheese-paring on Naxos's part. **Richard Wigmore**

Mozart

Mitridate, re di Ponto

Michael Spyres *ten*.....Mitridate
Patricia Petibon *sop*.....Aspasia
Myrtò Papatnasiu *sop*.....Sifare
Christophe Dumaux *counterten*.....Farnace
Sabine Devieille *sop*.....Ismene
Cyrille Dubois *ten*.....Marzio
Jaël Azzaretti *sop*.....Arbate

Le Concert d'Astrée / Emmanuelle Haïm

Stage director **Clément Hervieu-Léger**

Video director **Olivier Simonnet**

Erato © 2 DVD 9029 58517-5

(174' • NTSC • 16:9 • DD5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, February 20, 2016

Includes synopsis in French only



Defeated by Pompey and sending a report of his own death, Mitridate returns to his kingdom to find that his two sons

are in love with Aspasia, his bride-to-be. Farnace, the elder, rejects Ismene, to whom he is betrothed, and plots against his father; Sifare's love for Aspasia is returned. Mitridate imprisons both sons but they rally to his aid when the Romans invade. Mortally wounded, the king blesses the union of Sifare and forgives a remorseful Farnace.

Mitridate was composed by the 14-year-old Mozart for the ducal theatre in Milan. It's an old-fashioned *opera seria*, complete with a (more-or-less) happy ending. Mozart rose to the challenge with music of an astonishing power and beauty, albeit at a very leisurely pace. This production gets off to a rocky start. A group of actors assembles; there are chairs and a trestle table; breakfast is taken. A boy reads aloud the first couplet from *Mitridate*, the tragedy by Racine on which the opera is based. Then, reverting

to Italian but still reading from the paperback, Patricia Petibon/Aspasia launches on a rewritten version of Mozart's recitative; she is still holding the book in the ensuing aria. You fear that the whole opera is going to be sent up, but once the adults have raided the dressing-up basket, the real drama takes over.

There are several things to which one might take exception: Farnace, who has not been in battle, has his arm in a sling, with a bloodied sleeve; Mitridate looks very unregal in his belted raincoat. However, Clément Hervieu-Léger, an actor and director from the Comédie-Française, gets vivid acting from his cast. The plain setting forces one to concentrate on the emotions of the characters. Musically, everything is first-rate. Michael Spyres negotiates the wide leaps of his entrance aria with ease. Patricia Petibon is accomplished in the coloratura and intense when she addresses the shades of Elysium. Sabine Devieille's lighter soprano is perfect for Ismene. The roles of Sifare and Farnace were written for castratos. Myrtò Papatnasiu, abetted by a fine horn obbligato from Jeroen Billiet, manages the long lines of 'Lungi da te' wonderfully well, while Christophe Dumaux produces a stream of golden tone in his repentance scene.

Emmanuelle Haïm's tempos are ideal and Le Concert d'Astrée play impeccably. Ultimately, though, I wouldn't recommend this over Graham Vick's Covent Garden production (being revived this summer with, as it happens, Michael Spyres): reducing the original three acts to two makes for an over-long first half and spoils the Act 2 curtain, where Aspasia and Sifare have – the brief final Coro aside – the only ensemble in the entire opera.

Richard Lawrence

Royal Op, Daniel (7/95*) (OPAR) OAR3105D

Ravel

L'heure espagnole

Gaëlle Arquez *mez*.....Concepción
Julien Behr *ten*.....Gonzalve
Mathias Vidal *ten*.....Torquemada
Alexandre Duhamel *bar*.....Ramiro
Lionel Lhote *bar*.....Don Íñigo Gómez
Chabrier España

Munich Radio Orchestra / Asher Fisch

BR-Klassik © 900317 (56' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Prinzregententheater, Munich, April 22-24, 2016



Smut and sophistication rub shoulders in Ravel's wonderfully sardonic



Sabine Devielhe and Michael Spyres are first-rate in Mozart's *Mitridate, re di Ponto*

sex comedy, first performed at the Opéra-Comique in 1911. It's a tricky piece to get right, though. Overplay the bawdry, as at Glyndebourne in 2012, and you risk coarseness. Err on the side of caution and things can turn anodyne. Asher Fisch's new recording, made during concert performances in Munich with a youngish francophone cast, is nicely sensual and engaging, if just occasionally short on irony.

Fisch aims for headiness but avoids blatancy. Rhythms pulse and throb, and the Hispanic turns of melody often have a pointed suavity that hints at innuendo. The orchestral sound, all plush strings and warm woodwind, is beguilingly opulent, but might not appeal to those who see Ravel primarily in terms of restraint and clarity. There's a languorous feel to it all, which says much about the relationship between pace and tempo in Fisch's conducting, since he's by no means slower than his rivals. This is beautifully engineered, too, though the ticking metronomes at the start are placed a bit too far back.

The singers play it straight without resorting to caricature. The results are often nicely ambivalent, though Julien Behr tends to understate Gonzalve's poetic extravagance and Lionel Lhote sounds too

young for the ageing if priapic Íñigo. But Alexandre Duhamel reveals striking levels of tenderness beneath Ramiro's rough exterior, Mathias Vidal is unusually endearing as fussy Torquemada and Gaëlle Arquez's glamorous Concepción has a wonderful line in understated obscenity: 'Cet homme est doué!', almost thrown away yet riddled with meaning, is priceless. It's a fine achievement, though I still prefer the darker lustre of Ansermet's interpretation with Suzanne Danco, still matchless as Concepción. No texts are provided here, which is a major drawback. And we don't really need Fisch's rather hard-driven performance of *España* as a filler. **Tim Ashley**

L'heure espagnole – selected comparison:
Ansermet (10/53[®]) (ELOQ) ELQ480 0124

Verdi

Un ballo in maschera

Katia Ricciarelli *sop* Amelia
Plácido Domingo *ten* Gustavus III (Riccardo)
Piero Cappuccilli *bar* Captain Anckarstroem (Renato)
..... Oscar
Reri Grist *sop* Oscar
Elizabeth Bainbridge *mez* Mam'zelle Arvidson (Ulrica)
..... Mam'zelle Arvidson (Ulrica)
Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House / Claudio Abbado

Stage director **Otto Schenk**

Video director **John Vernon**

Opus Arte © DVD OA1236D

(138' • NTSC • 4:3 • LPCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live, February 17, 1975

Includes synopsis



In the last decade or so Covent Garden has hosted two pretty dismal passes at Verdi's conspiracy thriller – three if you count a visit from the Mariinsky with what one critic memorably labelled a 'balls-up in mascara'. These successive failures cast a different light on Otto Schenk's 1975 Royal Opera staging, with grand designs by Jürgen Rose.

Limited effort has been made to probe the murkier corners of the piece – some of which, in William Bundy's lighting, are extremely murky indeed. Nor is the 18th-century society evoked here quite specific enough to stop one wondering whether we are meant to be in Sweden (as Verdi originally envisaged) or in Boston (where the opera was re-sited after the composer's troubles with the censor), although in the end I concluded

that colonial governors of America would probably balk at the watered silk frock-coat and gold brocade sported by Plácido Domingo's Gustavus/Riccardo before he heads off for his last twirl on the dance floor. What Schenk achieves, however, is no mean feat: a show in which the main characters meaningfully interact, have credibility and generate sympathy. The chorus have been well drilled and no one looks like they don't know why they're there. Later that year Domingo would sing his first *Otello*. Here he is enjoying himself as a devil-may-care ruler with a twinkle in both eye and voice; one of Verdi's most irritating heroes suddenly becomes charming, charismatic – almost irresistible: to adapt Dick Emery, he is awful, but we like him.

More applause, however, greets Piero Cappuccilli's 'Eri tu' than Domingo's 'Ma se m'è forza perderti'. The seasoned Cappuccilli would have been better known to this crowd, perhaps, but as Anckarstroem he also offers a masterclass in what we really mean by 'Verdi baritone': weight goes behind words, the Verdian line is sustained on long, sustained phrases and the character's essential nobility is beyond question. The relationship between king and retainer is what really gives this opera its sting. Cappuccilli's Anckarstroem begins the drama indulging his puppyish prince in a fatherly fashion; when he realises he has to drown the puppy he conveys a palpable sense of bereavement and shame.

Katia Ricciarelli was at the start of her career here. 'Ma dall'arido stelo divulsa' lies just out of her comfort zone and her 'blonde' timbre won't be to everyone's taste, but she has both melting and majestic moments here, her 'Morro, ma prima in grazie' stirring done. Some hootiness creeps into Elizabeth Bainbridge's delivery as Ulrica, the fortune teller, but she makes her moment count. Reri Grist is impeccable as Oscar, high-spirited, infectious warm, never simpering.

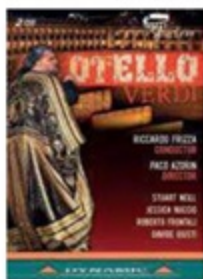
If the production as a whole is broad-brush, Claudio Abbado is laser-focused with the Royal Opera Orchestra, making a strong argument for Verdi's score as one of his most psychologically astute and dramatically nuanced. There's tremendous intensity when we need it – the staccato opening chords of Act 2 give us all the atmosphere the stage design does not – but there's also flounce, swagger and glitter, all slowly curdling as the bloody climax moves inexorably closer.

Neil Fisher

Verdi

Otello

Stuart Neill *ten*.....Otello
Roberto Frontali *bar*.....Iago
Jessica Nuccio *sop*.....Desdemona
Davide Giusti *ten*.....Cassio
Zamberletti Children's Choir; Vincenzo Bellini
Lyric Chorus, Marchigiano; Fondazione Orchestra
Regionale delle Marche / Riccardo Frizza
Stage director Paco Azorín
Video director Tiziano Mancini
Dynamic (F) ② DVD 37767; (F) ② 57767
(145' • NTSC • 16:9 • DD5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)
Recorded live at the Arena Sferisterio, Macerata,
July & August 2016
Includes synopsis



Audiences at the Festival Castell de Peralada are evidently less concerned than many in the 21st-century opera world about how best to portray Otello's racial difference. Paco Azorín's production features Stuart Neill as a lightly boot-polished Moor replete with oversize golden earring. But it's actually Iago who is centre stage in the production: before the start we see him with his devilish assistants – clearly kept obedient by regular abuse – warming up, ready to dictate the action.

The staging (filmed outdoors) is a dark, economical affair spread over an enormously wide playing area. It features minimal props but plenty of projections on to a solid brutalist background; and some of those projections seem to reflect Iago's calculations and indications for how things should unfold. His minions hang about to give Otello's increasingly paranoid actions a helping hand when necessary. Costumes are classic with a modern twist (some eccentric disc-like ruffs for the Venetians in Act 3 the only real flirtation with the bizarre). At heart, though, it's essentially a straightforward, traditional show.

And it features some pretty straightforward performances. Neill is tireless as Otello, the voice and diction clear throughout and the stamina impressive. Much of his acting is thoroughly rudimentary but he rises to a moving 'Nium me tema' at the end of an honest, heartfelt account of the role. Jessica Nuccio isn't the most meltingly lyrical or mellifluous Desdemona but she offers a genuinely affecting, touchingly acted performance. Roberto Frontali's Iago lords over it all imposingly, his powerful baritone allied to the sort of enunciation that always

makes it so pleasurable to hear native Italians in this repertoire. There's similar verbal pleasure to be had from Davide Giusti's Cassio, even if vocally he's short on polish.

Polish is also in short supply in the scrappy orchestral playing under Riccardo Frizza, whose conducting is often rather plodding – the drama of the final scene seems to be kept alight primarily through the efforts of Tamta Tarieli's fiery Emilia. Extra kudos to Nuccio for managing to smile so graciously while being serenaded by a very flat children's chorus in Act 2, and to the whole company for recovering after the *a cappella* section of Act 3's *concertato* finale sags rather worryingly.

This is a performance with plenty of issues, then, and Antonenko's early Salzburg *Otello* under Muti remains my top choice for a recent DVD. Still, it has an admirable straightforwardness, and you might well find yourself warming to its honesty and integrity. **Hugo Shirley**

Selected comparison:

Muti (CMAJ) DVD 725008; ② 701504 or 725104

Wagner

Parsifal

Lars Cleveman *ten*.....Parsifal
Detlef Roth *bar*.....Amfortas
Sir John Tomlinson *bass*.....Gurnemanz
Katarina Dalayman *sop*.....Kundry
Tom Fox *bar*.....Klingsor
Reinhard Hagen *bass*.....Titirel
Hallé Youth Choir; Royal Opera Chorus; Trinity
Boys Choir; Hallé Orchestra / Sir Mark Elder
Hallé ⑤ ④ CDHLD7539 (4h 19' • DDD)
Recorded live at the Royal Albert Hall, London,
August 25, 2013
Includes synopsis



Wagner's final masterpiece has been well served on disc over the last few years, with new sets from Marek Janowski (Pentatone, 10/12), Jaap van Zweden (Challenge Classics, 12/11) and Valery Gergiev (Mariinsky, A/10), all originating in concert performances. Mark Elder's new recording also comes from a concert: his and the Hallé's contribution to the BBC Proms' Wagner anniversary celebrations in 2013.

It's a fair bit rougher around the edges than the alternatives mentioned above. The sound, for a start, is decent enough but short on sheen and shimmer, with voices, balanced quite close, moving around quite a bit in the stage picture (the concert was

semi-staged). And then there are the voices themselves, none of them flatteringly captured. At the centre of it all is John Tomlinson's Gurnemanz. It's a portrayal of immense authority and still astonishing verbal acuity, but his bass is now in a ragged state, wobbly and hollow anywhere above around middle C and greatly taxed when taken even higher – as of course it often is by this role.

Katarina Dalayman is a committed Kundry but sounds effortful and slightly hazy, lunging for many of her top notes with inconsistent results – her performance of the role is much better seen as well as heard, as opposite Jonas Kaufmann on Sony's DVD of François Girard's Metropolitan Opera production. Lars Cleveman is reliable in the title-role, but is similarly hazy in timbre and entirely lacking in Heldentenor ring or steel. Detlef Roth's Amfortas isn't much better: the voice sounds dry and small, unable to offer much sense of tragic grandeur. Tom Fox is a vivid, satisfying Klingsor, though, and there's good work in some of the smaller roles, not least an excellent bevvv of Flower Maidens.

But it's the conducting, along with the playing of the Hallé, which is the recording's greatest strength. Elder's approach to the score is leisurely (on the clock he takes almost exactly as long as Gergiev, and both take over 30 minutes longer than Janowski) but he never really lets things drag; only some parts of Act 2 feel to me as though they could do with a little more urgency.

And Elder's single-minded patience – much of it, one notes, reflecting the many indications in the score to keep things slow – creates a powerful and quietly hypnotic sense of weary sadness, an entirely appropriate feeling of pale grandeur. He controls everything with the surest of touches right up until a deeply moving account of the final bars, and his orchestra are with him every second of the way, playing with sensitivity and feeling, as well as an impressive delicacy of timbre.

The singing on all three recordings I mentioned in my first sentence is better – as it is on numerous other recordings. But listen past that, if you can, and this set certainly has something to offer.

Hugo Shirley

Johan Botha

Beethoven Fidelio – Gott, welch Dunkel hier
R Strauss Ariadne auf Naxos – Bin ich ein Gott, schuf mich ein Gott?
 Daphne – Zu dir nun, Knabe!
 Die Frau ohne Schatten – Amme, wachst du?
Wagner Lohengrin – Atmest du nicht. Die

Meistersinger von Nürnberg – Morgenlich leuchtend. Parsifal – Webe! Webe! Was tat ich.
 Tannhäuser – Hör an, Wolfram
Johan Botha *ten* Vienna State Opera Orchestra /
Semyon Bychkov, Seiji Ozawa, Donald Runnicles,
Giuseppe Sinopoli, Christian Thielemann,
Franz Welser-Möst, Simone Young
 Orfeo © C906 171B (73' • DDD)
 Recorded 1997-2014



When the South African tenor Johan Botha died in September last year, the opera world lost one of its most reliable, clarion-toned tenor voices. But while this memorial issue of extracts from live performances at the Vienna State Opera focuses on his German roles, the booklet tribute is surely right to emphasise his background in the Italian repertoire as being the foundation on which those qualities were built.

It's the impeccably schooled Italianate quality that he brought to everything he sang that made him such a remarkable artist, while his legato line, cleanness of timbre and clear-sighted musicianship were what made him such a refreshing performer in repertoire that one often hears barked. The flipside was that those same remarkable qualities, allied to his equable stage persona, also arguably brought certain dramatic drawbacks, as undoubtedly did the restrictions imposed on his acting by his size.

That means that he's at his best here at those works with a certain abstract quality, or which don't require getting down and dirty dramatically speaking: embodying the impersonal masculinity of Strauss's Emperor (one of his very best roles); singing with rare elegance, if rather tightly, as Lohengrin or, for James Rutherford's avuncular Sachs, Walther; tireless as Strauss's Apollo (also recorded complete by Decca) and Bacchus. That substantial *Ariadne* chunk, tenderly conducted by Christian Thielemann and with Soile Isokoski as delicate Ariadne, is probably the disc's highlight.

Temperamentally Botha was less well suited to Florestan's alternating despair and elation, or to the psychological torment of Tannhäuser or Parsifal; but the extracts here nevertheless show that his singing of the roles was always of the very highest quality. The collection as a whole is a bit of a hotchpotch, inevitably, and some extracts fade out rather abruptly. The sound is rather dry, too, which doesn't always flatter Botha's focused

sound; you don't get much sense of its size or ability to project. But you're left in no doubt as to what a terrific instrument it was, what a fine, intelligent artist Botha was, and how much he is going to be missed. **Hugo Shirley**

'Pace e guerra'

Gasparini Il Bajazet – A dispetto **Handel** Lotario – Non disperai peregrino. Partenope – Rosmira, ove ti guida^a...Ch'io parta...Furibondo spira il vento
Hasse Demetrio – Dal mio ben che tanto amai^a
Pollarolo Ariodante – Già mi par **Sarro** L'Arsace – Quell'usignuolo **Torri** Amadis di Grecia – La cara tua favella. Lucio Vero – Pace e guerra.
 Venceslao – Parto, non ho costanza **Vinci** Il Medo – Pria che sposarlo...Taci o di morte... Sento scherzar^b

Terry Wey *countertenor* with ^a**Vivica Genaux** *mez*

^b**Valer Sabadus** *countertenor* Bach Consort, Vienna / Rubén Dubrovsky

Deutsche Harmonia Mundi © 88985 41050-2 (75' • DDD • T/U)



The Swiss-American countertenor Terry Wey has taken roles in a number of

Baroque opera recordings, as well as some Bach Passions and cantatas, but this is the first real recital disc of his own. Happily there is more to it than favourite Handel; this selection of arias associated with the castrato singer Antonio Maria Bernacchi (1685-1756) claims seven premiere recordings among its 15 tracks – not surprising when you consider that the composers include Pietro Torri, Domenico Sarro and Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, who even to most Baroque opera enthusiasts are little more than names in books.

Every one is a good find, though. Bernacchi was renowned as one of the most technically dazzling singers of his day, and there is much bravura passagework in Torri's 'Pace e guerra', Handel's 'Furibondo spira il vento', Pollarolo's 'Già mi par' and Gasparini's terrific, horn-chortling 'A dispetto'. Wey dashes them off with vigour and flair, and is also equal to the more poised virtuosity to be heard in the relaxed soaring lines of Vinci's 'Taci o di morte' and the long rises and falls of Torri's 'Parto, non ho costanza', as well as the *galant* elegance of Torri's 'La cara tua favella' and the Hasse duet (in which he is joined by soprano Vivica Genaux). The programme also features an enjoyable trio written by Torri for a one-off celebrity ensemble of Bernacchi, Farinelli (here represented



Véronique Gens and Hervé Niquet throw themselves into a provocative French programme with 'an engrossing mix of abandon and restraint'

by Valer Sabadus) and Vittoria Tesi (Genaux). It would be futile, however, to pretend that the two slower Handel arias do not easily surpass all of these in terms of deeper emotion and beauty. Bernacchi was often described as lacking in this area but Wey's lyrical and vocal grace do them full justice.

There is keen and incisive accompaniment from the Bach Consort Wien, putting all their feet in the right place under Rubén Dubrovsky, while the theatre acoustic of the Vienna Kammeroper gives it all the right clear-cut atmosphere.

Lindsay Kemp

'Visions'

Bizet Clovis et Clotilde – Prière, ô doux souffle de l'ange! **Bruneau** Geneviève – Seigneur! Est-ce bien moi que vous avez choisie? **David** Lalla-Roukh – Sous le feuillage sombre **Février** Gismonda – Dit-elle vrai? **Franck** Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère. Rédemption – Le flot se lève **Godard** Les Guelfes – Là-bas, vers le palais **Halévy** La magicienne – Ce sentier vous conduit vers le couvent voisin **Massenet** – La Vierge – Le dernier sommeil de la Vierge: Extase de la Vierge **Niedermeyer** Stradella – Ah!...Quel songe affreux! **Saint-Saëns** Étienne Marcel – Ah! Laissez-moi, ma mère! **Véronique Gens** *sop*
Munich Radio Orchestra / Hervé Niquet
Alpha © ALPHA279 (56' • DDD)
Includes texts and translation



This tremendous, heady disc finds Veronique Gens and Hervé Niquet examining sub-cults of visionaries, saints and mystics in some of the less familiar 19th- and early 20th-century French operas and oratorios. It's provocative stuff, its emotional – at times emotive – impact immeasurably heightened by very careful programming. Gens opens with Bruneau's Geneviève – heroine of his eponymous 1881 Prix de Rome cantata – responding, Joan of Arc-like, to a divine call to save France from its enemies, then broadens the psychological terrain to encompass the Gothic frissons of Niedermeyer's *Stradella* and the mystico-erotic contemplation of a very human lover in Godard's *Les Guelfes*. The climax is reached with Massenet's depiction of the Virgin Mary's ecstatic vision of Paradise after the Assumption, a disquietingly sensual passage, given the context, that balletomanes will recognise at once as the final *pas de deux* from Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*. Thereafter the mood becomes calmer and the recital closes with reflections on the efficacy of prayer from Bizet's *Clovis et Clotilde* (another Prix de Rome cantata) and Franck's *Rédemption*.

Gens and Niquet throw themselves into all this with an engrossing mix of abandon

and restraint. Gens's trademark combination of purity of utterance and smoky tone speaks volumes in a repertoire in which 'religion [is] the palliative for carnal love', as the booklet notes put it. Much of the time, she's sparing and introverted, which means that the big emotional outpourings are all the more overwhelming when we reach them. In Bizet, Godard and the Virgin Mary's aria from *Les Béatitudes*, it's the long-breathed, hovering lines that send shivers down your spine. But real turmoil erupts when Léonor, the heroine of *Stradella*, wakes from a terrifying nightmare and senses she is being punished by an inscrutable God. And the way Gens's voice surges in rapture through the Massenet is simply breathtaking. Niquet is just as committed, just as insightful, and the Munich Radio Orchestra's contribution is first rate. At 56 minutes, the disc is on the short side, but any more would, I suspect, feel like overkill. I also found the emotional trajectory gains even greater force from reversing the playing order of the last two tracks, ending with Bizet rather than Franck. It's a spectacular achievement, though: whatever you do, don't hold back. **Tim Ashley**

► See our Veronique Gens feature on page 22

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

The Editors of Gramophone's sister music magazines, Jazzwise and Songlines, recommend some of their favourite recordings from the past month

Jazz

Brought to you by **jazzwise**

Andromeda Mega Express Orchestra

Vula

Alien Transistor © 8 8091822532 6



Vula, saxophonist Daniel Glatzel's Berlin-based 18-piece contemporary orchestra's fourth album, draws from a colourfully

diverse panorama of contemporary classical, jazz, space-age rock and latin music but sounds like it belongs in a new sub-genre all of its own. There's a cohesion though and Glatzel's orchestrations emphasise the lighter acoustic timbres of woodwinds and strings, and at times it gives you an idea of what good easy-listening music might sound like if played by avant-garde musicians. The opening title has echoes of 'Les Six' impressionist composers, a special nod going out to Darius Milhaud's early

jazz-inspired *La Creation du Monde. In Light of Turmoil* is a kaleidoscopic riot of Frank Zappa-like chattering melodies. *qwetoipntv vjadfklvjieop*, as it says on the lid, is an abstract, pointillist collage of passing noise-electronic samples and instrumental motifs. If listening to the album as a whole is a little similar to the feeling of being dazzled by a movie's special effects, there's hardly a dull moment. **Selwyn Harris**

David Binney

The Time Verses

Criss Cross Jazz © 1392



The older he gets – and your reviewer is now in his 90th year – the more he worries about what the future holds for the music he loves. But there's one non-mainstream musician, in whom I have the greatest faith, who may well continually

turn our music on its head but who will always come back to its basics...alto saxophonist/composer/producer David Binney, now in his early 50s. And he's just released what could arguably be his best-ever album, his ninth for Criss Cross Jazz. It's a quartet date with the rhythm section he uses for his weekly gigs at the 55 Bar in Greenwich Village. Solid and swinging as the solos are, what makes this record so exceptional are the compositions which are extremely difficult, even by Binney standards. There are so many challenging tunes on this CD – like *Strange Animal*, *The Reason to Return*, *Time Takes Its Time* and *Where Worlds Collide* – all with different arranging concepts, some with changes, some without. But Binney is his own man and a major talent. This is a brilliant and highly original record. P.S. Talking of ages, the producer here, Gerry Teekens, is 81! **Tony Hall**

World Music

Brought to you by **SONGLINES**

Duo Sabîl

Zabad, Twilight Tide

Harmonia Mundi © HMM905279



I'm used to the word 'sebil' in Turkish meaning 'fountain', but in Arabic it means also 'road' or 'way': both

describe well the evocative music of this duo on their third album. The original members of Sabîl, oud (lute) player Ahmad Al Khatib and percussionist Youssef Hbeisch, are Palestinian musicians living in Europe, and they are here variously augmented by Elie Khoury on buzuq (a Lebanese/Syrian popular lute) and Hubert Dupont on double bass. The combination of instruments is felicitous as, in my opinion, any project with oud and tempered piano is intrinsically doomed, while percussion instruments are the oud's natural foil and

double bass rounds out the sound for the Western ear without compromising the delicate Eastern tuning. The album thus respects the classical maqam tradition while innovating through the intimate dialogue between the different instrumentalists who listen intently and let the music breathe in ample spaces. Multilingual liner notes and a crystal clear detailed sound complete this excellent production. **Francesco Martinelli**

Zaire 74 - The African Artists

Wrasse Records © WRASS349



The 'Rumble in the Jungle,' as the 1974 boxing bout between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman was known, was one of the most significant cultural events in the history of Zaire (DR Congo). A three-day music festival accompanied the event and

the excellent films *When We Were Kings* and *Soul Power* gave tantalising views of some of the artists who performed. Unfortunately, footage of many of the African musicians was omitted in favour of an extensive line-up of American performers. It's long been a sore point among African music lovers, and this double-CD partially helps to rectify the situation. A short, dynamic and crisp sounding set of 20 minutes by singer Tabu Ley Rochereau opens the show. Also in good form was Abeti Masekini – at the time one of Africa's top female artists and a huge star in her home country. Lita Bembo's Orchestre Stukas represented the more youth-orientated groups. The icing on the cake, perhaps inevitably, is the appearance of Franco & OK Jazz. Equally wonderful is Miriam Makeba – exiled from her homeland of South Africa, she was a true global star. A fascinating audio document of a remarkable event. **Martin Sinnock**

Gramophone, Jazzwise and Songlines are published by MA Music, Leisure & Travel, home to the world's best specialist music magazines. To find out more, visit gramophone.co.uk, jazzwisemagazine.com and songlines.co.uk



Shigeru Kawai Concert Series
Beautiful Grand Pianos In 6 Sizes,
Crafted By Master Piano Artisans
In Hamamatsu, Japan.

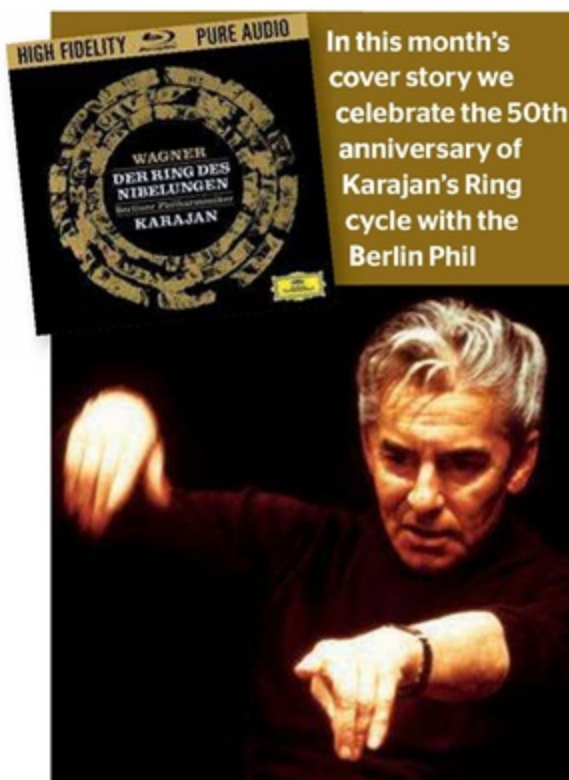


MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

Revisiting Karajan's Ring inspires two different musical journeys through his discography

Karajan and Wagner

As the anniversary of the launch of Herbert von Karajan's Wagner *Ring* cycle is commemorated on this month's cover, it's worth remembering the relationship between the conductor and the composer. Wagner provided many milestones along the Karajan journey. It was a performance of *Tristan und Isolde* at Berlin's State Opera in 1938 that earned him the much-quoted plaudit 'Das wunder Karajan' ('The Karajan miracle'). He'd return to the opera at Bayreuth, at La Scala, in Vienna and in Salzburg (the cast of his 1972 production would make a complete recording for EMI, worth hearing for Jon Vickers's searing Tristan and Christa Ludwig's richly characterized Brangäne), but perhaps one of his most powerful renditions of the *Liebestod* was in the company of Jessye Norman in Salzburg. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* brought out the best in Karajan. In 1951, caught live at Bayreuth, he was on fine form with a cast that included Otto Edelmann, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Hans Hopf and Erich Kunz. As John Steane put it: 'It's a glorious account of the glorious work, with most of the strengths of a live recording and few of the disadvantages'. Returning to the score in 1971 in the company of the Staatskapelle Dresden, a unique encounter on disc, the old magic was rekindled with a strong cast and a genuinely palpable sense of concentrated yet relaxed music-making. *Lohengrin* (1982) was not one of Karajan's happier experiences and there was a sizeable hiatus in the recording sessions as the conductor and his *Lohengrin*, René Kollo, fell out – though interestingly Kollo is the singer who most grabs the attention, often singing with great subtlety and reining in his large voice to breathtaking effect. But Karajan is at his most interventionist, and the recording's perspectives do change alarmingly (particularly noticeable when listened to with headphones). In 1981 (after a gap of 20 years), Karajan returned to *Parsifal* and gave us another strongly cast recording with orchestral playing of sublime beauty – a set that won him *Gramophone's* Recording of the Year in 1981.



Karajan: too focused on 'core' repertoire?

In this month's cover story we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Karajan's Ring cycle with the Berlin Phil

20th-century Karajan

Received opinion is that Karajan was only interested in the 'core' repertoire, returning time after time to the same works and not always for the better. But during his long life, he conducted a lot of new music, sadly recording a relatively narrow modern repertoire. I remember the composer Hans Werner Henze telling me that Karajan was a conductor he'd love to have heard conduct more of his music. And Karajan was a fine interpreter of 20th-century music – his experiences towards the end of the Second World War showed him fear, and he would later channel this into music-making of considerable intensity. Added to which, the pain he suffered from back-problems also seemed to infuse his later performances. What would one have given to hear him in Mahler's Tenth, more Shostakovich, Hartmann, Martinů, and yes, Henze.

Mahler's Ninth was a symphony Karajan came to late and he left two magnificent recordings – the second, live, one is the finer. A stage closer to dissolution, harmonically speaking, is Schoenberg's tone-poem *Pelleas und Melisande* which Karajan recorded in 1974 – the orchestral blend is sumptuous and the long score unfolded with enormous skill. Perhaps a little more abandon might have come with longer experience in concert (it was a studio recording with no related live performances), but it's mighty impressive. Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*, again sumptuously done, makes one long for a *Lulu* (possibly slightly strong meat for the maestro): the aching quality he draws from the strings is intense. Karajan's first *Rite of Spring* drew from Stravinsky the waspish quip about 'tempo di hoochie-coochie', so when he returned to the score 15 years later the gloves were off and the result is a performance not just of greater contour and fibre, but of a staggering array of colours, particularly from the magnificent Berlin winds. If 'Karajan 2' is to be preferred in *The Rite*, I've a soft spot for 'Karajan 1' in *Shostakovich's Tenth* (the 1981 remake is rather 'glassy' to my ears). There's a genuine sense of terror in the second-movement *Allegro* in 1967. And *Prokofiev's Fifth*? There have since been more 'complete' performances but I love Karajan's again for the woodwinds, as well as the conductor's ability to unfurl those melodies gloriously.



To explore these playlists via a streaming service, or to create your own, we suggest qobuz.com. You can listen to these particular playlists at gramophone.co.uk/playlists

Wagner *Tristan und Isolde* BPO / Karajan Warner Classics

Wagner *Tristan und Isolde - Liebestod* Norman VPO / Karajan DG

Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* Bayreuth / Karajan Naxos

Wagner *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* Staatskapelle Dresden / Karajan Warner Classics

Wagner *Lohengrin* BPO / Karajan Warner Classics

Wagner *Parsifal* BPO / Karajan DG

Mahler *Symphony No 9* BPO / Karajan DG

Schoenberg *Pelleas und Melisande* BPO / Karajan DG

Berg *Lyric Suite* BPO / Karajan DG

Stravinsky *Rite of Spring* BPO / Karajan DG

Shostakovich *Shostakovich Symphony No 10* BPO / Karajan DG

Prokofiev *Prokofiev Symphony No 5* BPO / Karajan DG

REPLAY

Rob Cowan's monthly survey of historic reissues and archive recordings

Svetlanov's epic Russian legacy

The conductor's collected contribution to the national tradition

Melodiya has certainly upped its game when it comes to box-set presentation. After its sturdy Richter and Gilels sets comes this 'limited edition' first volume of Evgeny Svetlanov's 'Anthology of Russian Symphonic Music', mostly material previously available from various sources, for example Melodiya, Chant du Monde and EMI LPs, through Chant du Monde, Olympia, RCA, Melodiya CDs and Warner Music France's 'Édition officielle Evgeny Svetlanov' featuring Svetlanov's legacy as conductor and pianist. The current handsome and rather heavyweight silver-grey production is said to include 'unreleased recordings', though we're not told which recordings are issued for the first time.

Tchaikovsky claims the lion's share of the repertoire, with one disc in particular proving of special interest: a coupling of the lavishly demonstrative *Concert Fantasia*, Op 56, with the prodigiously gifted soloist Mikhail Bank (one-time Chief Conductor of the Cuba National Ballet), recorded in 1990, and the Third Concerto with Emil Gilels recorded in 1968, as broad and loving as any version available, equally effective in the rehearsal as in the concert performance (both are included). The 'rehearsal' element only impinges towards the end of the piece, when Svetlanov attends to a chunk of *tutti*, but the orchestra's bow-tapping accolade for Gilels gladdens the heart.

Gilels also brings his red-blooded temperament to the Second Concerto whereas the First is given by his then 20-year-old daughter Elena, a remarkable live performance, not note-perfect by any means but extravagantly expressive and with more than a hint of her father's tonal refinement. The symphony cycle (including a magnificent *Manfred*) is well known from its EMI LP and subsequent RCA/Melodiya incarnations, the ballets from a previous Melodiya box-set, and

there are three of the orchestral Suites, excluding No 1. Various tone poems and shorter pieces, including a magical live sequence from *The Snow Maiden* incidental music (previously out on Olympia), demonstrate Svetlanov's ability to inspire the most tender string-playing imaginable, his phrasing reminiscent of vintage Mengelberg, Golovanov and Stokowski.

Svetlanov's imagination at the keyboard is vividly illustrated on the all-Medtner bonus CD where he sounds as if he's improvising the notes as he goes along. That, I suppose, is the hub of his art, a composer's burning creativity (he left an impressive corpus of orchestral work, some of it hopefully to be included in a future volume) which makes for performances that can be inspired, reckless, excitable, interpretatively extreme, profoundly moving and never boring, certainly not in his prime. He was a Russian through and through, and you feel that authenticity burn its presence in every bar of these performances. The Rimsky-Korsakov selections are both generous and musically interesting, *Antar* a live recording from 1977, a beautiful performance, the *Sinfonietta on Russian Themes* another impressive reading, this time from 1984. The central *Adagio* uses a theme better known in the context of Stravinsky's *Firebird* ballet, and in addition to the three symphonies there are various fragments and suites, some more familiar than others.

Glinka's determination to foster Russian nationalist music dates from his meeting with Balakirev in 1855, the year he wrote his *Prayer* ('My thoughts are heavy') to words by Lermontov, Svetlanov's 1957 recording featuring the incomparable tenor Ivan Kozlovsky. This is lyrical singing the like of which we virtually never hear nowadays. One of the most remarkable pieces included is

Baba Yaga by Dargomizhsky, which predates Liadov's well-known piece of the same name by almost 40 years. It opens to a folk song much loved by Chaliapin – 'Arise red sun', or something very like it – before flying off with mortar and pestle for all manner of imagined skulduggery. Fine sound here too, which isn't always the case, though nothing is less than acceptable.

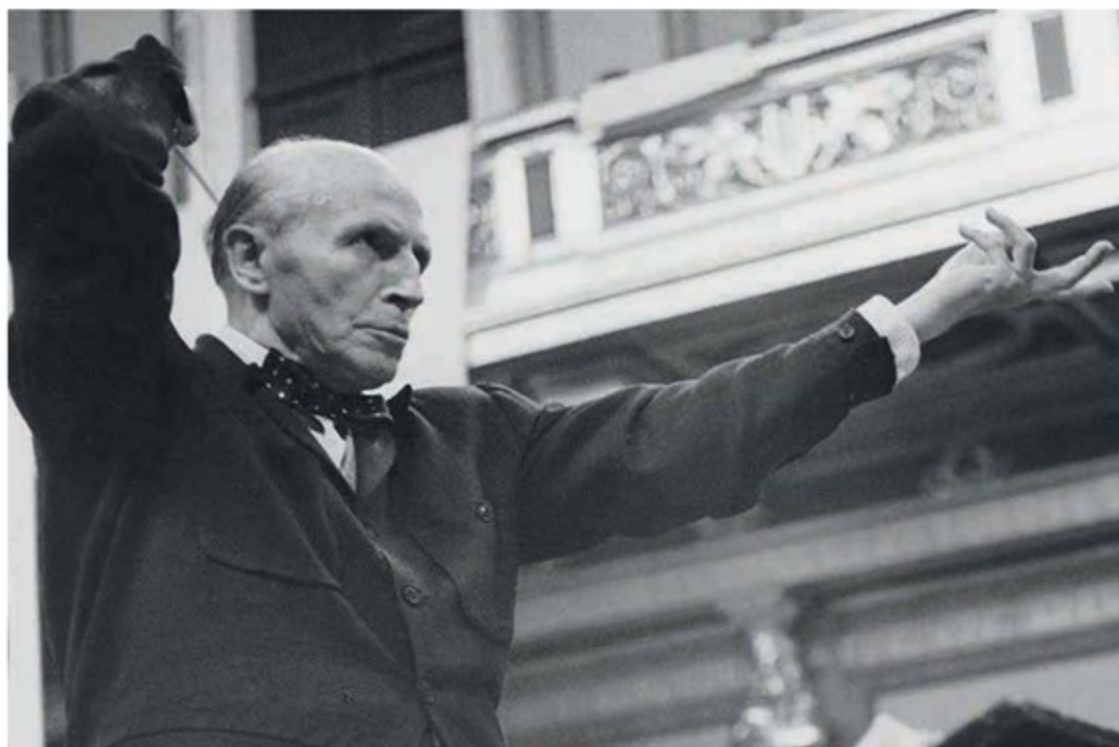
Many more works repay close scrutiny, not least the symphonies of Borodin and Balakirev, Taneyev's Fourth and Lyapunov's Third, Kalinnikov's First and Second Symphonies, three suites by Arensky and Medtner's first two piano concertos, both superbly played, the First by Tatiana Nikolayeva, the Second by Abram Shatskes. Of course there are countless shorter works (Liadov, Rimsky, Mussorgsky, etc) – Svetlanov was a dab hand at making magic within limited musical time frames – and the level of musical dedication evident throughout the series is nothing short of staggering. Annotation is minimal so you'll need to do some web-searching to gen up on individual pieces.

As to future volumes, for starters we can hopefully look forward to the complete symphonies of Glazunov, Rachmaninov, Scriabin and, most significantly, Myaskovsky (a composer especially close to Svetlanov's heart); all exist as part of the conductor's extant discography. In an ideal world every symphonic tradition would have its Evgeny Svetlanov to help spread the gospel but we should be eternally grateful that at least Russia struck lucky with this wonderful musician. **G**

THE RECORDINGS



Anthology of Russian Symphonic Music
Evgeny Svetlanov
Melodiya © (56 discs)
MELCD100 2480



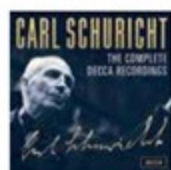
Carl Schuricht, who studied composition with Engelbert Humperdinck, is given a box-set tribute

Schuricht on Decca

It's ironic that Carl Schuricht's 1952 Decca recording of Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio italien* opens to a blaze of trumpets that could easily hail from Russia during the same period, the stridency of the Paris Conservatoire brass sounding distinctly Muscovite. Schuricht whips up the close of both this and the Theme and Variations from the Third Orchestral Suite with a degree of excitement that indeed anticipates Svetlanov and other Russians of a similar era. Schuricht's Decca recordings occupy a fitfully involving nine-disc set, which is at its best in recordings with the Vienna Philharmonic, most notably a sequence of Mendelssohn overtures, the second symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms (Beethoven's First Symphony is also included), Brahms's Violin Concerto with Christian Ferras and his Second Piano Concerto with Wilhelm Backhaus. The latter is said to have been recorded during sessions at the Grosser Saal, Musikverein, in 1952, which makes the presence of audience noise between the movements somewhat bizarre. It's a good, rugged performance but Backhaus's earlier version under Böhm (due for reissue as part of a Warner Böhm 'Icon' box) is also worth looking out for. Among the 'first international CD releases' are two recordings from 1947 featuring the violinist Georg Kulenkampff. Brahms's Double Concerto is hampered by some occasionally turgid playing from cellist Enrico Mainardi, whose first entry is as dull as ditchwater, certainly in comparison with Kulenkampff's sweet-toned response. The Bruch First

Concerto is another matter, affectionate, noble and beautifully accompanied by the Zurich Tonhalle under Schuricht. In spirit it's as near to a Huberman Bruch First (at least as imagined) as any I've ever heard. As for the rest, I'd say that specialists are better served than the average collector. Schuricht was a fine, conscientious conductor. There's plenty that's of passing interest but no real revelations.

THE RECORDING



Carl Schuricht: The Complete Decca Recordings'
Decca © 10 483 1643

Huberman's Beethoven

Mention of Huberman brings me to a welcome Warner Classics reissue of his 1934 recording of the Beethoven Concerto with the Vienna Philharmonic under George Szell, an excellent new transfer of a performance that fizzles with life, more so in fact than many of its successors. Not for Huberman the broad exegeses of, say, Perlman and Giulini (whose first movement clocks up a generous 24'26" in comparison with Huberman's 21'10") or, more extreme still, Kennedy with Tennstedt (at 26'26"). Huberman's first entry takes off like a rocket and Szell fits the Classical mould with total conviction. Joachim's cadenza is a real tour de force, brilliant, capricious, provocative and stylistically distinctive, especially towards the close where (at around 19'39") Huberman toys with portamento (it has

an almost jazzy effect) and projects the movement's imitated drum rhythm beneath a super-swift trill. For me he bags the spirit of the piece, its potent combination of sublimity and muscular gesturing, like no other violinist in the history of recording. The coupling could hardly be more apt, the recording of the *Kreutzer* Sonata that Huberman made in 1930 at Petty France in London with his great contemporary and compatriot Ignaz Friedman, as combustible a reading as any before or since, Friedman releasing great waves of sound, Huberman sporting some old-fashioned devices but fanning the flames in a way that seems to utterly transcend time and the limits of shellac recording. There have been other transfers of this legendary recording, many of them good, but none that are better than this.

THE RECORDING



Beethoven Violin Concerto.
'Kreutzer' Sonata
Bronisław Huberman *vn* Ignaz
Friedman *pf* VPO / George Szell
Warner © 9029 58951-6

Budapest Quartet

Praga's reissue of the Budapest Quartet's 1965-66 recordings of the six Mozart string quintets with viola player Walter Trampler is not to be confused with an earlier set (1941-56) that the same group made with Milton Katims (excepting K174, where Trampler steps in) and that has already been reissued on Sony Classical (88843 06351-2). Aside from the different extra viola player in the quintets, the earlier line-up features Edgar Ortenberg, Alexander Schneider or Jack Gorodetzky playing second violin. The quartet personnel for the later set is Joseph Roisman and Alexander Schneider (violins), Boris Kroyt (viola) and Mischa Schneider (cello). In general these very cleanly engineered stereo recordings report performances that are more steadily paced than their predecessors, less fleet and dynamic. Also, the Sony set is stronger on tension (the slow movements of the G minor and D major works), though the later versions have a mature, 'lived-in' feel to them that makes for a satisfying listen. The transfers are excellent.

THE RECORDING



Mozart String Quintets
Budapest Quartet;
Walter Trampler *va*
Praga © 2 PRD250 370

Books



Lindsay Kemp peruses the writings of Ralph Kirkpatrick: *'Despite beginning in a somewhat formal tone, the opening memoir soon relaxes into something more pleasingly anecdotal'*



Jeremy Nicholas welcomes two books on Van Cliburn's Moscow triumph: *'Behind the musical genius and public adoration, there was, as is often the case, an unhappy human being'*

Reflections of an American Harpsichordist

Edited by Meredith Kirkpatrick

Boydell & Brewer, HB, 226pp, £76

ISBN 978-1-580-46591-5



For people who know it, the name of Ralph Kirkpatrick and its importance to the history of

harpsichord-playing and scholarship in the 20th century will forever be enshrined in the 'Kk' numbers by which Domenico Scarlatti's 555 sonatas are catalogued. That seems unlikely to change, but his personality and musical presence as a player have receded from view in the 33 years since his death. He has his champions, but the many recordings he made between the 1930s and '60s – including the complete keyboard works of Bach for DG Archiv – no longer figure prominently on the harpsichord landscape.

If that seems a shame for a musician who was widely admired as one of the finest harpsichordists of his day, he himself would probably have accepted that it was inevitable once that landscape had been changed by the appearance in the early 1960s of newly built harpsichords based on historic originals, which replaced the hybrid, deeply inauthentic 20th-century 'revival' instruments on which he had been forced to practise his trade. (The first harpsichord he owned, by the way, was once the property of Busoni.) Although Kirkpatrick was totally convinced by historical instruments from the moment he first played one ('I saw the possibility of escaping into something shapely yet free, something that at its best could sound like a superlatively controlled improvisation'), they had alas arrived too late for him; the artistry and historical awareness of his playing notwithstanding, he must have known that few listeners now would put up with the nasal twang of those Neuperts, Pleyels and Dolmetsch-Chickerings, or



with the frequent register-changes their weak and colourless tones seemed to require.

That much is one of the things made clear more than once in this collection of memoirs, essay and lectures, all previously unpublished and here brought together and edited sensitively by Kirkpatrick's niece. Another is his skill and wit as a writer. The first part of the book is a 35-page memoir covering the years 1933-77, written as a sequel to a previous memoir published as *Early Years* (New York, 1985). Despite opening in somewhat formal tone, it soon relaxes into something more pleasingly anecdotal, especially about his time performing in Europe and the USA in the years around the Second World War. *Gramophone* readers will enjoy his reminiscences as a continuo-player with Beecham ('a born improviser and quite lacking in analytical instincts or in profundity; but who with a flick of the wrist could galvanise an orchestra into dazzling performances'), with Walter (who, rehearsing the *Matthew Passion* with deeply unenthusiastic New York musicians, 'laid down his baton and asked the useless question "Gentlemen, have you no souls?"') and of Koussevitsky's minimal conductorly intervention producing a B minor Mass of 'super-charged intensity'. *Gramophone* writers, on the other hand, may like to know that he thought 'the criticism of journalists virtually useless'. And who wouldn't be fascinated by his description of playing a Bach *English Suite* in his apartment to none other than a rummed-

up Billie Holiday, whose face 'registered everything; no manifestation of the music seemed to escape her'? Of equal interest, however, are his descriptions of post-war Germany, Italy (where he accidentally bit the Pope on the hand) and Spain, where he combined recital work with research for his book on Scarlatti. Kirkpatrick loved Europe, and anyone who has read *Domenico Scarlatti* (Princeton: 1953), one of the great composer biographies, will recognise something of its vivid pictorial colour in the way he writes here about Spain, and later too about visits to Africa.

After such memoirs, the essays and lectures that follow are more sporadically compelling. Throughout, however, one is conscious of Kirkpatrick's professionalism and intellect as a musician, his erudition as a lover of fine art, language and literature, his sturdiness of opinion and his capacity for self-awareness and judgement. Highlights include an account of receiving the score of Elliott Carter's fiercely demanding Double Concerto for harpsichord and piano and realising with horror just what an approximation the onrushing premiere was going to be; a 1971 essay on 'The Equipment and Education of a Musician' which reels off a set of technical, mental and disciplinary requirements daunting enough to put off the cockiest young performer, before confessing just how few of them he himself had acquired when he started out; and a startling revelation that, in hot weather, for private practice he was wont to be naked.

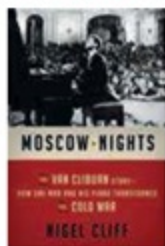
Kirkpatrick was on the teaching staff at Yale University from 1940 until retirement in 1976, and the book ends with five lectures he delivered there between 1969 and 1971, including one, 'Style in Performance', which, in its plea for important stylistic decisions to come organically from within rather than academically from without, seems to hint at dissatisfaction with what he considered the narrow horizons and literal-mindedness of the early music movement of that time. Any doubts that it was just that are dispelled in the final essay, 'Private Virtue



Ralph Kirkpatrick's name will forever be enshrined in the 'Kk' numbers by which Domenico Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas are catalogued

and Public Vice in the Performance of Early Music', in which he takes a stout swipe at early music's 'self-limitation' and 'general atrophy of the sensibilities', before closing in optimism for its legacy 'in terms of knowledge and sensibility, of taste and common sense'. Let's hope his ghost is content that it has. **Lindsay Kemp**

Moscow Nights

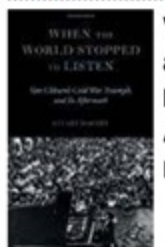


The Van Cliburn Story: How One Man and his Piano Transformed the Cold War

By Nigel Cliff

Harper, HB, 464pp, £20
ISBN 978-0-062-33316-2

When the World Stopped to Listen



Van Cliburn's Cold War Triumph and its Aftermath

By Stuart Isacoff

Alfred A Knopf, HB, 304pp, £22.50
ISBN 978-0-385-35218-5

It is notoriously difficult to find anyone to publish books on pianists. I speak from experience. So when not one but two books

about a pianist appear in the same month, it is unusual; when both books are about the same pianist...there must be an anniversary. Ah yes. There is. The pianist in question is Van Cliburn, and next year it will be sixty years since he won the first Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition.

Younger readers may not be aware of the story, how improbable his victory seemed or what extraordinary extramusical significance it held. For them and those whose memory needs jogging, the story (briefly) concerns the then virtually unknown 23-year-old American pianist competing (reluctantly, at first) in a competition newly initiated by the Soviets to demonstrate their musical and cultural superiority over the Americans. This was at the height of the Cold War when relations between the two superpowers could hardly have been frostier – and both sides were determined that one of their own should triumph. National pride and prestige were at stake. No one, though, had quite reckoned on the effect that the gangling, diffident American with his Texan drawl and charming Southern manners would have on Moscow audiences, especially when connected to a powerful and highly

emotional engagement with the piano and certain parts of its repertoire.

The jury was as starry as they come and included Emil Gilels (chairman), Dmitry Kabalevsky, Heinrich Neuhaus, Lev Oborin and Sviatoslav Richter (from the USSR) as well as the unlikely figure of Sir Arthur Bliss. The result could easily have been rigged in the Russians' favour but premier Nikita Khrushchev shrewdly saw the benefit of an honest verdict and approved Van Cliburn's win. It made front-page news all over the world. The American returned home a national hero and was given a ticker-tape welcome, still the only musician to be so honoured. His victory in Moscow, the respect he earned there and the popular acclaim he won led directly to a thaw in international relations.

Best-selling recordings followed. Cliburn's account of the ubiquitous Tchaikovsky B flat minor Concerto was the first classical recording to sell a million copies. His live recording of Rachmaninov's Third, with all its imperfections, still reduces this writer to tears; his MacDowell D minor Concerto remains the benchmark, his Prokofiev Third a strong contender. It was a glamorous and very busy career...until the early 1970s when his playing began to deteriorate, then became increasingly

GRAMOPHONE

Choose the right
subscription for you

- THE GRAMOPHONE CLUB
- PRINT EDITION
- DIGITAL CLUB
- DIGITAL EDITION
- REVIEWS DATABASE



THE WORLD'S LEADING CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS MAGAZINE

EXPAND YOUR COLLECTION

With the world's most authoritative classical music reviews section, written by our unrivalled, international and objective panel of expert reviewers

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

We are devoted to exploring the artists stamping their mark on recording today, with captivating features and exclusive interviews

COMPOSER PROFILES

We celebrate composers both past and present, providing you with a unique perspective on the lives and work of the greats of the classical music world

THE GRAMOPHONE CLUB

Our best value package includes 13 print issues, digital access to every issue since 1923 and over 30,000 reviews, plus exclusive offers throughout the year

Visit www.magsubscriptions.com/gramophone
or call **0800 137 201** (UK) **+44 (0)1722 716997** (OVERSEAS)

Pictured: Jonas Kaufmann (© Sony Classical/Julian Hargreaves/Nessun Dorma - The Puccini Album 2015) who featured on the July 2015 cover of Gramophone. Full annual retail price for print only (13 issues) is £74.75; print only annual subscription, Digital Edition and reviews Database (£64); Digital Club (£84); Gramophone Club (£106). Postage and packaging is not included for overseas orders. Overseas subscription p&p: Europe £22.80, Rest of World £27.00. If you have a subscription enquiry then please email subscriptions@markallengroup.com

mannered and inaccurate. By the end of the decade, Van Cliburn had all but disappeared from the concert platform and, in effect, never came back. 'The most famous dropout in American concert history', to quote Donal Henahan in the *New York Times* in 1986. His name lives on in the form of the Van Cliburn Competition, now among the most prestigious of its kind.

The story has been told before, most notably in *The Van Cliburn Legend* by the pianist Abram Chasins and Villa Stiles, published the year after the Moscow triumph. It is a flawed, rushed job for which Chasins himself admitted that he had invented material to make it more interesting. Howard Reich's *Van Cliburn* (1993), written with the pianist's cooperation, crosses the line into hagiography. No such criticism of the newcomers. So – which to go for? Nigel Cliff's account has the subtitle of *How One Man and His Piano Transformed the Cold War* and is the more detailed version of events, concerned as much with Soviet politics as musical matters. Of the book's 366 pages of narrative, 350 are devoted to the period until Van Cliburn's virtual retirement in 1978. He is hauled out again at the Reagan/Gorbachev summit in 1987 to appear like a ghostly talisman. There are further visits to Russia, one in 2005 to receive an award from Putin.

The political element is authoritative and illuminating. When we are taken to the days and weeks following the death of Stalin (1953), the terrifying Beria stands next to Molotov at a May Day parade and whispers in his ear, 'I did him in! I saved you all'. How does Cliff know such an intimate detail? Is this book a novelised account? No. It is the result of assiduous research: though the text bears no footnote numbers, no fewer than 49 pages of notes at the rear of the book reveal exactly the extent of Cliff's sources for this kind of colour (in this case a line from a book called *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics* by Felix Chuev, 1993).

Cliff has also immersed himself in the musical world, but there are moments when you wonder exactly how well versed in the piano and its literature he is, including taking the Chasins and Reich books at face value. Here is the young Van playing the opening of Liszt's Twelfth Hungarian Rhapsody: '...a storm-racked chandelier of crashing chords that serious pianists were supposed to spurn'. Really? It has always been standard repertoire for innumerable 'serious' pianists. Some of Cliff's research is detailed beyond any reader interest: 'Gary Graffman nobly denied himself a second



Van Cliburn: a Cold War triumph at the first Tchaikovsky Competition in 1958

helping of the famous tomato aspic bursting with juicy jumbo shrimp'; 'Nancy Reagan... wore a black beaded gown accented with red-and-white beaded flowers paired with diamond stop earrings'. The photos are terrific, the book is beautifully produced and the narrative zips along with the pace of a novel, but for a real insight into Van Cliburn's character, the inside story of the Moscow competition and the pianist's subsequent decline, then the book to turn to is Stuart Isacoff's *When the World Stopped to Listen*.

Isacoff – pianist, author of *A Natural History of the Piano* and founder of *Piano Today* magazine – approaches the subject with the seasoned eye of a classical music journalist. Where Cliff's tome perhaps struggles to be too many things simultaneously, Isacoff concentrates on the making of Van Cliburn, his skewed personality, the competition itself and its aftermath. The story is all so much messier than the glossy colour supplement all-American-boy fairy tale that was sold at the time and which Van Cliburn's people managed to perpetuate until his death (from bone cancer) in 2013.

Behind the musical genius and public adoration, there was, as is often the case, an unhappy human being. Elements of the real Van Cliburn story are all too common: a martinet parent – in this case his mother, living her own failed ambition through her son – and the Faustian pact of innate musicality and God-given gifts traded for emotional immaturity, lack of education and inability to cope with career demands.

At the height of his fame in the 1960s and '70s his homosexuality could not be made public for fear of denting his wholesome boy-next-door image. After the competition win, never enjoying robust health, he came to rely heavily on amphetamine injections to keep him going (no mention of the creepy 'Dr Feelgood' in Cliff's book) and increasingly on astrology to guide his decision-making. His repertoire was comparatively small, his professional discipline poor, his time-keeping erratic.

Isacoff is by no means an unsympathetic observer but he tells the story without gloss. His sources include Khrushchev's home movies (made available by his son Sergei) which show how genuinely warm the relationship was between the pianist and the premier. Among the photos is a handwritten score card for the competition (the appendices feature the second-round scores in English, with and without Richter's controversial vote, which help explain the Byzantine scoring system) and one of Liu Shikun playing in Van Cliburn's home in 2012. The American's taste in interior décor clearly rivalled that of Liberace, but Liu Shikun's visit was a touching gesture to his dying friend, and details of his horrific treatment after tying second in Moscow make for a chilling afterword. Both books are written to appeal to the general reader and are heartily recommended, but Isacoff's has the extra appeal for pianophiles, a riveting if all too familiar story of brief brilliance and burn-out. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Classics RECONSIDERED



Peter Quantrill and **Caroline Gill** weigh up the merits of Gardiner's first recording of Beethoven's mighty Missa solemn, our Recording of the Year in 1991



Beethoven

Missa solemn

Soloists; Monteverdi Choir; English Baroque

Soloists / John Eliot Gardiner

Archiv Produktion 429 7792

Gardiner, like Terje Kvam on Nimbus before him, sheds some of the weight of numbers usually employed; he also has a team of soloists without weaknesses, and, it must be added, his own genius for making all things new. Comparison between the two recordings hardly needs to go beyond the first entry of the choir, where Gardiner's singers bring meaning and urgency to their cries of 'Kyrie' which with Kvam's Oslo

Cathedral Choir are scarcely more than formal statements. Another factor is the very crucial matter of balance. Many recordings have brought their soloists too far forward, shine too bright a light on them, and others have had the chorus too far back. The Tate recording [EMI] is an example of the first, Kvam the second. Here the balance is right, and separation of the various elements has been achieved without exaggeration or any sense of unnaturalness.

It is indeed an outstanding recording in every respect. If one wished to cavil, it might be over absence of appoggiaturas

now generally accepted in the quasi-recitative cries of 'Agnus Dei' in the 'war' passage, or perhaps to object that the 'Pleni sunt coeli' is not so much *allegro pesante* as *presto brillante*. The *Credo* is also at a tempo faster than usual, possibly not taking sufficient heed of the *ma non troppo* qualifying *allegro*. Even so, there seems nothing forced here and the relative lightness of the forces makes such speeds viable and with exhilarating effect, felt most magically of all in the 'Et vitam venturi' fugues. Each of the soloists contributes fine work, and they are an entirely homogeneous quartet. **John Steane** (3/91)

Peter Quantrill It's salutary to note, isn't it, that Gardiner and his team made this recording before tackling the symphonies, at least on record. Apparently much of the final product was made in a single, final take, on the day the Berlin Wall came down. A momentous context! But does it transfer to disc? Although his recording from 2012 was made live, I find it more polished.

Caroline Gill The recordings have a similar immediacy about them, to my ears. Although the 2012 version might not come from the same powerful social context that would have been present in the minds of the singers when the 1989 version was made, it nevertheless has immense power. But where I hear the Classical-era experience of the musicians in 1989 giving the piece every ounce of their energies as a very moving balance between its historical context and its artistic challenges (which would have been so revolutionary to Beethoven's contemporary audience), I hear it less in the later version.

PQ In 1989, the soloists in the 'Christe' sound positively relaxed, subtle and supple. Whatever the circumstances of the recording, I would welcome here more urgency, more individual projection from each singer. There's a touch of restraint about both the casting and the singing of the soloists. Not for Gardiner the casting of the *Missa* as a sacred *Fidelio*, with a Leonore, a Florestan and a Rocco, as you commonly find.

CG There is an undeniable increase in tension in the 2012 recording, and a strength in the soloists that opens a bigger gap between them and the choir; but I hear this more as a loss of subtlety than a straightforward improvement, and I miss it. I am less looking for a sacred *Fidelio* than an apprehension of the power of choral music for its own sake, and Gardiner shows that with such open-mindedness in this recording that I value it almost for that alone! But I wonder if you're also hearing those changes in the context of Gardiner's Beethoven in general?

PQ Taken on its own terms, the choral work in the 1989 recording set new standards and expectations – rather as the Robert Shaw Chorale (also unusually small for its time, also comprised of professional singers) did for Toscanini in the 1940s and '50s. When the Monteverdi singers are let off the leash in the fugues to conclude the *Gloria* and *Credo*, they eat up those awkward leaps and top Cs for breakfast. The part-writing of Palestrina and Handel, studied by Beethoven, is familiar to everyone concerned.

CG Yes, and Gardiner brings out that counterpoint beautifully in that recording. As for the setting of new standards and expectations, too, I couldn't agree more. There is a lack of restraint in the singing, where the soloists – the majority of whom have the sort of musical background rooted in the English choral tradition that Gardiner must have found impossible to ignore – trailblaze a kind of joyful liberation from the limitations of choral music that carries the choir in its wake.



Gardiner's first recording of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* was Gramophone's Recording of the Year in 1991

PQ For sure, Gardiner meets the most obviously challenging aspects of Beethoven's writing head on: relishes them, in fact. I remember, before he conducted the *Missa* at the 2014 BBC Proms, how he made short work of the presenter who had the temerity to suggest that some people found it too difficult. 'It's like climbing the north face of the Eiger,' he said. 'You might find different paths but it's still the same mountain.' He encountered fewer stones on the path later on.

CG A lack of inhibition in 1989 is even more evident in the orchestra, and especially in the brass and woodwind who play the *Gloria* in particular as if their Classical-period instruments have no limitations and need no concessions towards potential squeaks or cracked notes. Together, it creates a rawness that not only feels entirely appropriate to Beethoven but that also gives it a position in his output that makes sense. I think that level of drama in the period-performance of choral music up until that point was unusual and it still electrifies me when I listen to it.

However, at certain points, the clarity of those wonderful distinguishing features is not always as it should be – especially in the more polyphonic sections...

PQ Yes, the recorded balance is troublesome. Entering in the *Credo*, poor Catherine Robbin seems to be singing from John the Baptist's cistern; the choral sopranos are shunted way off to the left of the sound picture; and in emphatic declamation (of which there is a great deal!), choral and orchestral forces move as separate masses in which individual strands are not easy to distinguish. All the same, there are some quiet miracles of textural illumination.

CG They're odd, aren't they, those problems of balance? I think they're partly borne out of the vocal qualities of the soloists. The combination of William Kendall and Alastair Miles has always struck me as particularly imaginative, with their shared musical heritage but utterly different vocal colours. But in some ways this 'imbalance' aids the illumination of the

text; it heightens the sense of confusion that shoots through the piece, emphasising the idea of this music raging against itself in search of some identifiable meaning.

PQ The opening bars of the *Sanctus* sound for all the world as though an organ is present. But no: on closer listening, Gardiner achieves the effect with basses, cellos and bassoon just as Beethoven marks in the score. This is one of those passages which bear out Gardiner's contention regarding Beethoven (from 2014 again) that 'anything to do with the Godhead being ineffable and out of reach, anything to do with man's inadequacy, he's superb at'. Another is the designedly toughest passage of the entire work, the fugato launching the 'Dona nobis': magnificently combative.

CG In all his performances of this piece, Gardiner always seems to be searching to crystallise some sense of terror – be it by way of the *Gloria*'s assault upon the senses, or more by stealth.

PQ But there are also some miscalculations. Charlotte Margiono's impatient plosive to begin the 'Pleni' rather grates on repetition; so does some of the untempered string intonation in the Praeludium. I do, though, admire the sweet simplicity of Peter Hanson's solo: his discretion where other leaders make it too close a cousin of the Violin Concerto's *Larghetto* in the same key; and how the vocal soloists are encouraged to cut back on the vibrato here and match him for tone. And those 'French' dotted rhythms to which Gardiner is so partial impart just the necessary metrical lilt in this context (where in the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* they rather cut the music down to size). I can't think of a more unaffectedly affecting *Benedictus* on disc. It goes around my head for days afterwards.

CG The opening of the *Benedictus* is exactly that: a siren-call that ultimately only reinforces the sense that whatever transitory relief might be brought from the battle by something as beautiful as that violin solo, the war is still on, and impossible to win. So the fact that the solo here is so underplayed works far better than it does in many other recordings (its relationship with the Violin Concerto is so close, in any case, that to emphasise it at all would be like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut). I am including the later Gardiner version here, too, which may be entirely complementary but, for me, can ultimately neither usurp nor transcend the spiritual depth of that first recording. **G**

THE SPECIALIST'S GUIDE TO...

The hybrid piano concerto

There's not a shortage of genuine piano concertos, yet the 'greedy' and 'combative' nature of the piano has led to many other works being arranged for it with orchestra. **Jeremy Nicholas** selects from these riches

Numerically, there are more concertos for the piano than for any other instrument. Almost all the most popular were written by composers who were also good pianists – Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Saint-Saëns, Rachmaninov, Prokofiev; with honourable mentions for a few whose keyboard prowess was not their strongest card: Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Ravel. There are countless other fine piano concertos, both forgotten and still played, that provide the same frisson of pleasure as those that are most frequently played (see the catalogues of Hyperion, Chandos, Dutton, Danacord and Naxos, inter alia).

The piano, because of its versatility, is an omnivorous and greedy beast. It wants to play everything. Hence the myriad arrangements for piano solo of symphonies, concertos, string quartets, operas and ballets. (Violinists and cellists can pinch bits of Chopin as much as they please, but they still need the piano to make the arrangements work.)

But the piano is not only greedy. It is combative. It likes nothing better than a good argument with an orchestra. And if it thinks a piano solo – or, for that matter, a violin concerto or even a symphony – can be turned into a piano concerto, it says, 'Bring it on'. Here are 10 such examples. One common element binds them together:

the love that the 10 arrangers – 'concertifiers'? – had for the music of the composers they were transforming. Some of these concertos and concertinos are, arguably, improvements on (or even preferable to) the originals. They might illuminate certain elements or reveal characteristics that the originals do not offer. Others are simply alternative views that sit happily alongside the originals while making an unconscious commentary on them. All have that same mix of memorable themes, of a piano soloist alternating joyful exuberance and lyrical grace, pitted against the friendly antagonism and sympathetic companionship of the symphony orchestra. **G**



'Act of love': Dejan Lazic's live recording of his own arrangement of Brahms's Violin Concerto with the Atlanta SO under Robert Spano is 'as convincing as it is impressive'

PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFF ROFFMAN



Honauer and Raupach, arr Mozart
Piano Concerto No 4 in G, K41
 Ronald Brautigam *fp*
 Cologne Academy /

Michael Alexander Willens
 BIS (1/17)

Mozart was 11 when he composed his first four piano concertos, all arrangements of works by others. The two outer movements of No 4 come from Keyboard Sonata Op 1 No 1 by Leontzi Honauer (c1730-c1790), the central *Andante* from Sonata Op 1 No 1 (for harpsichord and violin) by Hermann Raupach (1728-78). Harriet Smith refers to 'the communicativeness' of Brautigam's playing.



Handel, arr Beecham
Piano Concerto in A
 Betty Humby Beecham *pf*
 LPO / Thomas Beecham
 SOMM-BEECHAM (3/01)

Using various clavichord and harpsichord pieces by Handel, as well as excerpts from *Il pastor fido*, *Ottone* and *Teseo*, Sir Thomas Beecham wrote a four-movement piano concerto for his wife, Betty Humby, and recorded it in 1945. Set aside your musical preconceptions and bask in the innocent fun and pure joy of the Beechams' music-making – an apt companion to CPO's three discs of 'Handel piano concertos' fashioned from his organ concertos Op 4 and Op 7 and Nos 13-16.



Beethoven, arr Beethoven
Piano Concerto in D, Op 61
 Orchestra of Opera North /
 Howard Shelley *pf*
 Chandos (1/12)

Produced in 1807 at the behest of Muzio Clementi, Beethoven's transformation of his own Violin Concerto is perhaps the best-known example of this hybrid genre. The orchestral part is exactly the same, but the piano has many additions (including the massive first-movement cadenza). Howard Shelley, conducting from the keyboard, is one of today's greatest exponents of this kind of repertoire and brings gravitas and gaiety in equal measure to this underrated score.



Schubert, arr Liszt
Grosse Fantasie 'Wanderer'
 Edith Farnadi *pf* London
 Philharmonic Promenade
 Orchestra / Adrian Boult

Naxos

Liszt was strongly attracted to Schubert's mighty *Wanderer* Fantasy for solo piano, its unifying process of thematic transformation exerting a strong influence on his own music. He made this version in 1851, adhering scrupulously to the original – a four-movements-in-one piano concerto in all but name. Edith Farnadi, among the finest (and most underrated) of Liszt players, brings depth and poetry as well as musical bravura.



Chopin, arr Wilkomirski
Allegro de concert, Op 46
 Michael Ponti *pf*
 Berlin Symphony Orchestra /
 Volker Schmidt-Gertenbach

Brilliant Classics (5/93)

Chopin began this first movement of a third piano concerto in 1830, abandoned it, then revised and extended it for publication in 1841 as a piano solo. It has been arranged as a one-movement concerto by Jean Louis Nicodé, André Messager and Kazimierz Wilkomirski. Michael Ponti proves a brilliant and convincing advocate against an orchestral part of far greater prominence than anything that Chopin himself would have written.



Liszt, arr Lambert
Dante Sonata
 Louis Kentner *pf* Sadler's Wells
 Orch / Constant Lambert
 Naxos (5/40)

'Après une lecture du Dante' is from the second ('Italy') volume of *Années de pèlerinage*. Constant Lambert turned it into a ballet; Frederick Ashton choreographed it; Robert Helpmann and Margot Fonteyn danced it. 'Kentner has never done anything so absolutely first-rate in every way as this very vivid interpretation,' raved *Gramophone's* Alec Robertson. 'Lambert's extraordinary apt and picturesque orchestration might have been dictated to him by Liszt in a dream.'



Alkan, arr Klindworth
Piano Concerto
 Dmitry Feofanov *pf*
 Razumovsky SO /
 Robert Stankovsky

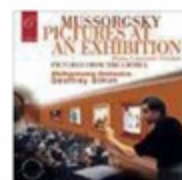
Naxos

Alkan's 12 Études in all the minor keys, Op 39, includes the Concerto for solo piano (Études 8-10), whose first movement alone is longer than the entire 'Hammerklavier' Sonata. No surprise, then, that someone – in this case Karl Klindworth (1830-1916) – should arrange it for piano and orchestra (albeit with cuts and alterations). In Feofanov's hands it remains a turbulent rollercoaster of a ride, if not quite as thrilling as the original.



Brahms, arr Lazić
Piano Concerto No 3 in D
 Dejan Lazić *pf* Atlanta SO /
 Robert Spano
 Channel Classics (2/10)

Following in Beethoven's footsteps, Lazić provides a rare example of a full-scale concerto arranged for a different instrument. Lovers of Brahms's Violin Concerto will miss nothing of the original orchestral part but might well notice, for example, the passages where Lazić replaces violin double and triple stopping with what he feels are pianistic equivalents. It's a tremendous act of love by Lazić, and his live 2009 recording, if heard without preconceptions, is as convincing as it is impressive.



Mussorgsky, arr Leonard
Pictures at an Exhibition
 Tamás Ungár *pf* Philharmonia
 Orchestra / Geoffrey Simon
 Cala (11/93)

There have been many orchestral versions of Mussorgsky's piano masterpiece, from the first in 1891 (Mikhail Tushmalov) to Leonard Slatkin's compilation drawn from arrangements by 15 others. Lawrence Leonard's 1977 take, however, is unique in retaining (and enlarging) the piano part, and making it the chief protagonist. This premiere recording (1992) has Ungár and his colleagues playing it as if it were a Russian piano concerto that had been in their repertoire for years.



Rachmaninov, arr Warenberg

Piano Concerto No 5 in E minor Wolfram Schmitt-Leonardy *pf* Janáček PO / Theodore Kuchar
 Brilliant Classics

Russian composer Alexander Warenberg's transformation of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony into a full-blown, romantic piano concerto had the permission and enthusiastic support of the composer's grandson. Warenberg, who took six months to write the piano part and two years to do the orchestration, conflated the symphony's second and third movements

to give the work a conventional three-movement form. Every single note is a faithful replica of Rachmaninov's style.

Wolfram Schmitt-Leonardy inhabits the music as if it were a normal part of the Rachmaninov canon in a recording produced by Pieter van Winkel – who first suggested the project to Warenberg, formerly his piano teacher.

THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

Telemann's *Musique de table*

To mark 250 years since Telemann's death, **David Vickers** undertakes the formidable task of surveying recordings of this massive work comprising three sets of variously instrumented pieces

The curse of the prolific composer is to be ignored, misunderstood or underappreciated – as is attested by even the most inquisitive musicians and experienced audiences having scant familiarity with the majority of Palestrina's Masses or Alessandro Scarlatti's chamber cantatas. The sheer volume of Georg Philipp Telemann's output defies close acquaintance for all but the most devoted scholars, and his 250th anniversary this summer (he died on June 25, 1767) will not be commemorated by box-sets offering a complete *opera omnia*: it is estimated that he wrote about 3000 works, and just the extant instrumental works include about 125 overture-suites, just as many concertos (often for combinations of several soloists), almost 50 sonatas ranging from quartets to seven-part pieces, 130 trio sonatas and nearly 90 solo sonatas. Rather than spend a lifetime getting to know these works that have survived, it has perhaps been more convenient to accept with complacency the verdict of the Hamburg professor Christoph Daniel Ebeling, who wrote in 1770 that Telemann 'would have been greater had it not been so easy for him to write so unspeakably much. Polygraphs seldom produce masterpieces'.

A counterargument designed to prove that Telemann was one of the 18th century's most gifted musical revolutionaries finds ample vindication in the massive anthology *Musique de table* (or *Tafelmusik*). This collection was part of the composer's industrious agenda of printing his own works initiated soon after he settled in Hamburg in 1721. Instead of hiring a printer to create the physical products, or sending them to a specialist firm in Amsterdam (as Corelli and Vivaldi had done), Telemann undertook at least some of his own engraving of the plates. He accepted

subscriptions at his house, on the stock exchange and at various booksellers, advertised serial publications in newspapers and handbills distributed around Hamburg, and corresponded with a network of agents across northern Europe to solicit subscriptions and act as booksellers.

REVIVAL OF A GENRE

On November 26, 1732, a handbill announced to Hamburgers that Telemann would soon be publishing 'Tafel-Music', to be 'divided into three productions', which would appear on Ascension Day, Michaelmas and Christmas 1733; it claimed: 'The best French paper will be used, and the music, engraved on metal plates, will look spacious and clear.' Newspaper advertisements added the promise that the names of subscribers would be printed with the work. In the event, 206 copies were ordered by 185 subscribers from all over Europe; in addition to connoisseurs from Spain, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and the Baltic states, there were 51 subscribers from Hamburg, 18 from Paris (the flautist Michel Blavet ordered 12 copies), 11 from Berlin and five from Frankfurt. Subscribers in Dresden included the Saxon court orchestra concertmaster Johann Georg Pisendel and the flautist Johann Joachim Quantz. In London, Handel studied his subscription copy closely, and borrowed several of Telemann's themes in his own concertos and oratorios.

'Table music' designed to provide musical entertainment during banquets had been a popular topos for publications of instrumental music during the 17th century, but by 1733 its heyday was long over. The musical inventiveness in Telemann's collection led the musicologist Steven Zohn to question astutely 'whether attentive listeners...could

have concentrated on the meal in front of them'. Indeed, the function of the *Musique de table* could easily be interpreted too literally. Whatever the origins of the musical smorgasbord served up in Telemann's 1733 collection, the structure of each 'Production' is an intriguing six-course feast that follows a set menu: 1) orchestral overture-suite; 2) chamber quartet; 3) orchestral concerto with several *concertante* soloists; 4) trio sonata; 5) solo sonata with basso continuo; 6) orchestral *tutti* conclusion (for the same instruments as the overture-suite). In advance of the publication, Telemann wrote to a friend, 'I hope that this work will one day bring me fame.' Ironically, the composer's fame was not in much doubt until after his lifetime, but the posthumous decline in his reputation has been at least partly reversed by enterprising musicians reviving the *Musique de table*.

RECORDINGS - A REVIVAL IN PIECES

Ignored for nearly two centuries, the *Musique de table* was republished by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1927, in a full score edited by the musicologist Max Seiffert. From the 1930s, piecemeal selections began to be recorded, the overture-suite from Production III with its French pastoral infusions becoming established as a favourite. The first complete sets presenting all three productions emerged in the mid-1960s, and since then many artists have recorded selections, most or all of a single production, or the entire collection. Although more than four hours' worth of Telemann's finest music stands up to the test, a handful of single-disc selections represent fascinating music-making not to be overlooked.

Collegium Aureum was one of the first professional orchestras to pioneer the use

MUSIQUE DE TABLE, partagée

en
Trois Productions,
dont chacune contient

I Ouverture avec la suite, à 7 instruments,

I Quatuor,

I Concert, à 7,

I Trio,

I Solo,

I Conclusion, à 7,

et dont les instruments se di-
versifient par tout;
composée

par
George Philippe Telemann,
Maître de Chapelle de L^{re} A^{te} S^{te} le
Duc de Saxe-Eisenach, et le Marg-
grave de Bayreuth;
Directeur de la Musique
à Hambourg.



GEORGIVS PHILIPPVS TELEMANN
REIPVBLICAE HAMBVRGENSIS DIRECTOR
CHORI MVSIQ.
Natus Magdeburgi MDCCLXXXI die 14 Martii

The title page of the original publication of *Musique de table* (Hamburg, 1733) and, inset, a portrait of Telemann c1745 by Lichtensteger

Alison Bury and Roy Goodman fizzles with good ideas about rhetorical phrasing.

Il Fondamento and Paul Dombrecht took a more coherent approach to programming with a complete performance of Production III. Each line, detail and gesture is 'sung' lyrically in the Overture-Suite in B flat, and there is shapeliness to the accentuation of strong and weak beats in the Concerto in E flat for two horns. Dombrecht's oboe-playing in the Solo Sonata in G minor is beguiling, and the Quartet in E minor for flute, violin, cello and continuo features refined playing by violinist Chiara Banchini.

The King's Consort used single string instruments in their presentation of two overture-suites. The pleasant reverberation of All Hallows church in Hampstead, London, plays its part in Robert King's smooth-surfaced polish, without much vigour from the inner parts and bass lines. Oboist Paul Goodwin and trumpeter Steele-Perkins subtly match their timbres (Production II), and the *concertante* violin playing by Goodman and Miles Golding is exquisitely phrased, but there is not much personality – the closing Furioso of Production III is much too polite even for the amiable Telemann. Single string instruments were used with a surer sense of eloquence and charm by the

of period instruments. Founded in 1962 in association with Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, it recorded all three concertos from the *Musique de table* in 1977. Directed by concertmaster Franz Josef Maier, the triple violin concerto (from Production II) is austere compared with subsequent versions, although there is an elegant treatment of episodic ideas from Maier and Barthold Kuijken in the concerto for flute, violin, cello and strings (Production I). In retrospect, Collegium Aureum's playing sounds laboured in comparison with the

advanced capabilities of period-instrument specialists which have since then become normal expectations. Ton Koopman's hotchpotch with his **Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra** presented the complete Overture-Suite in B flat (Production III) and a few of the catchiest movements from the Overture-Suite in D (Production II), the latter featuring buoyant trumpet-playing by Crispian Steele-Perkins. Koopman's dances jolt uncomfortably, whereas the triple violin concerto (Production II) featuring Monica Huggett,

Montreal chamber ensemble **Arion**, whose performance of most of Production I revolves around the core players of flautist Claire Guimond, violinist Chantal Rémillard, cellist Betsy MacMillan and harpsichordist Hank Knox. Arion's balanced playing offers sophisticated *notes inégales* (the Rondeau in the overture-suite), and Telemann's mixed-style taste of Italian, French and German elements is conveyed enchantingly in the concerto for flute, violin, cello and strings; the *galant* delicacy of the *Gratioso* movement makes Telemann's suave melodicism and inventiveness closely akin to Haydn's chamber music. The *Dolce* in the flute sonata is played with *cantabile* sweetness by Guimond, accompanied gorgeously by lute stop on the harpsichord and discreet cello.

Florilegium are no slouches either in their presentation of about half of Production I (and just the quartet from Production II). The overture-suite benefits from sustained legato in slow music and conversational incision in quick movements, but the chamber music-making brings out the best in these players: the sublime *Largo* that opens the Quartet in G is played with benevolent poeticism by Ashley Solomon (flute), Alexandra Bellamy (oboe), Kati Debretzeni (violin) and Jennifer Morsches (cello), and Debretzeni and Rodolfo Richter's violins unfurl fluently in the Corellian trio sonata – all adorned by the warmly expressive continuo realisations of harpsichordist James Johnstone and lutenist David Miller.

THE UNABRIDGED PERSPECTIVE

Telemann's diversity of styles, colours, moods and ideas led to him being admired by contemporaries across Europe as one of the most fecund musical revolutionaries of



Reinhard Goebel's Musica Antiqua Köln display unequalled technical ability

his age, and the best way for this to be illuminated for modern-day enquirers is to absorb the complete contents of all three productions of the *Musique de table* – although nobody should feel obliged to digest all 70-odd dishes in one gluttonous sitting. Listeners are spoilt for choice between eight complete sets, most of which offer delicacies that epicureans will wish to savour on more than one occasion.

The two first integral surveys were prepared simultaneously, apparently unaware of each other. Between February 1964 and January 1965 **Concerto Amsterdam** recorded the *Musique de table* for Telefunken. Leading participants included

the project's mastermind Frans Brüggen (recorder), Gustav Leonhardt (harpsichord), Jaap Schröder and Marie Leonhardt (violins), Anner Bylsma (cello) and Maurice André (trumpet) – all playing modern instruments but on the cusp of their decision to eschew them in favour of period instruments. French-style overtures feel heavy-handed and sturdy, and slower full orchestral passages seem drily cerebral, although perhaps they seemed less stiff in 1965 than they do now. Chamber music comes across more successfully: the turns between merriness and melancholy in the Quartet in D minor (Production II) are led by Brüggen's piccolo recorder, and in the sonatas the fine-drawn continuo playing of Bylsma and Leonhardt is readily identifiable. Meanwhile, between June 1964 and March 1965 **Schola Cantorum Basiliensis** recorded the first complete version to use period instruments, for DG Archiv. An innocent listener might be forgiven for struggling to tell that these are performances played on historical instruments: the hindsight of half a century

makes August Wenzinger's choices of tempo, characterisation and vibrato (not only in the strings but also in the flutes) seem traditionally old-fashioned. There are neither *notes inégales* nor little of the idiomatic embellishment we have come to expect in French-style overture-suites, and the grinding slowing-up at the close of most movements is cumbersome according to current taste. But Hans-Martin Linde and Joseph Bopp offer plenty of good ideas during Production I which ought to interest students of baroque flute-playing, and we ignore at our folly the contribution of innovators Edward Tarr (trumpet) and Michel Piguet (oboe) to the second

HISTORIC INNOVATION

Schola Cantorum Basiliensis / Wenzinger

Decca Eloquence ⑤ ④ ELQ482 5864

Characterised by dignified grandeur that may seem old-fashioned, the first complete survey



on period instruments lasts just under five hours – almost an hour longer than the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra's. Its long-overdue reissue is most welcome.

DAZZLING MUSICIANSHIP

Musica Antiqua Köln / Goebel

Archiv Produktion ⑤ ④ 477 8714AB4

The technical standards of musicianship are stupendous, even if sometimes the music is



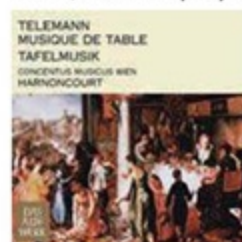
less emotionally affecting than it could be. Nicholas Anderson's review is spot on: 'punctilious in detail, incisive in rhythm, impeccable in ensemble and fiery in spirit.'

ABUNDANT ILLUMINATION

Concentus Musicus Wien / Harnoncourt

Warner Classics ⑤ ④ 2564 68704-1

Harnoncourt's ideas might not suit everyone's taste, and the playing is not unblemished,

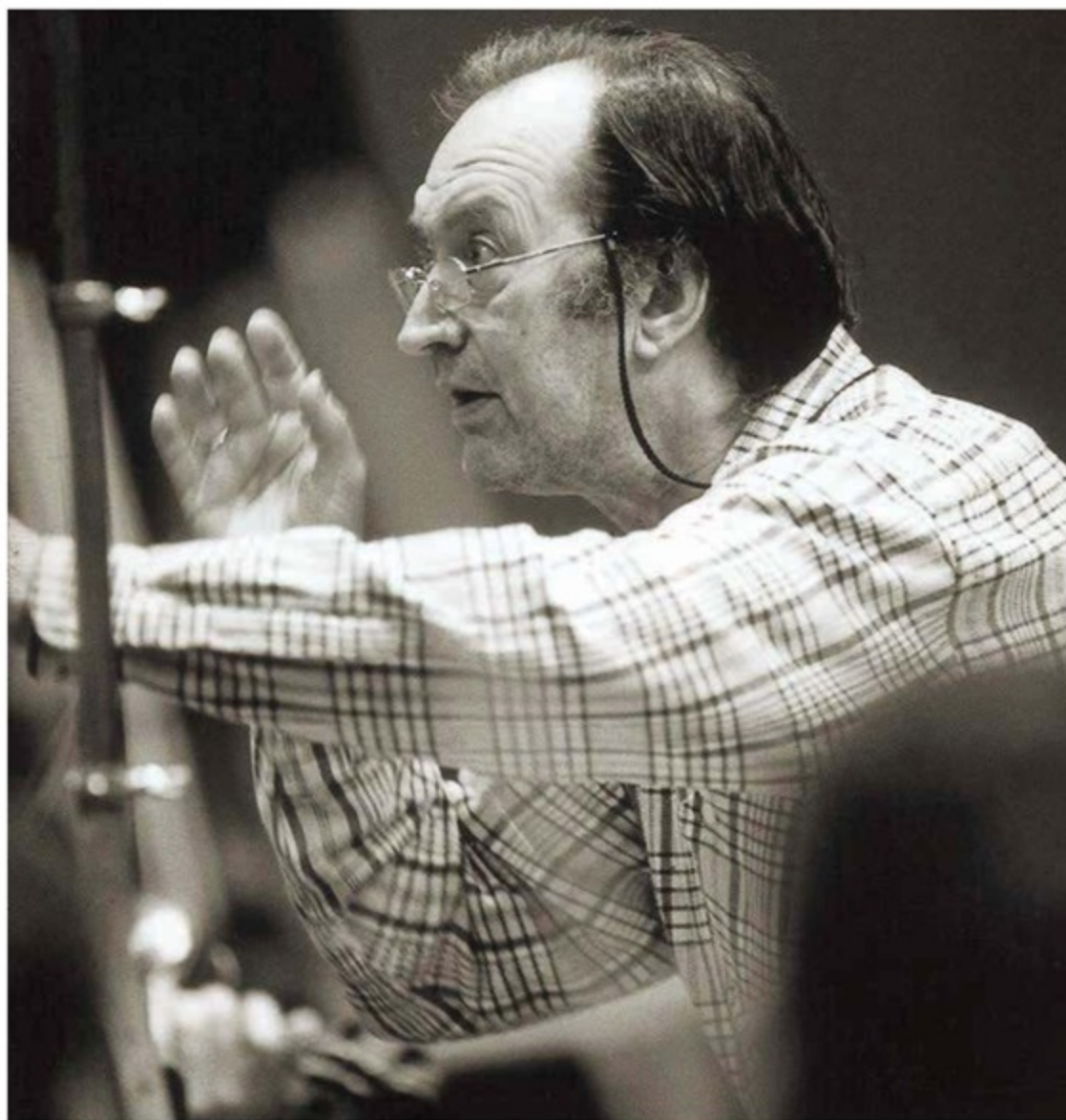


but the music-making is often by turns thrilling and gorgeous, and it's always packed with personality. Some of these interpretations are my personal favourites.

overture-suite. Measured decorum takes precedence over vitality, although in Production III there is an alluring sense of idyllic ease in the *Bergerie* (overture-suite) and an air of playfulness in the *Vivace* climax to the double horn concerto.

Having both unwittingly released complete sets in 1965, Teldec and DG Archiv proved that lightning can strike twice by doing it again in 1989 – though Nikolaus Harnoncourt's **Concentus Musicus Wien** and Reinhard Goebel's *Musica Antiqua Köln* pursued radically different aesthetic priorities. Harnoncourt's sagacity ensures that Concentus Musicus's shaping of internal details and diverse episodes within movements never lapses into mere formula. With four violins on each part, the overture-suites are played with broad expressiveness, although now and again the weighty treatment of the orchestra can be too muscular, which robs Telemann's music of its *galant* élan; however, such rhythmical vigour has exciting gutsiness in the overture-suite from Production II. In the triple violin concerto, nuanced phrasing has dynamic flexibility and imaginatively varied shading, and each movement inhabits its own rhetorical personality devoid of homogenisation (the contrapuntal turbulence of the *vivace* climax takes no prisoners). Production III's overture-suite has gentle pastoral beauty (*Bergerie*), vivacious swagger (*Postillons*) and velvety sensuality (*Flaterie*) – as the musical properties of each dance invites. The unbridled horns in the double concerto are pushed to their technical limits, which makes its *Vivace* finale into a thrilling hunting scene. Nevertheless, some of the most memorable spontaneity occurs in the chamber music, such as an incandescent sentimentality conjured for the opening *Largo* of the Quartet in G (Production I), Alice Harnoncourt's delicate *cantabile* playing in the violin sonata (Production II) and Jürg Schaeftlein's poignant oboe sonata accompanied beautifully by keyboardist Herbert Tachezi and Harnoncourt himself on the cello (Production III).

From a technical point of view, **Musica Antiqua Köln's** phenomenal standard of playing is without equal. There is dazzling musicianship from top to bottom of the orchestra in the Overture-Suite in E minor (Production I), with contrasts between smouldering and irrepressible moods. Sudden exaggerations of accentuated features are executed so superbly that the ensemble seems to breathe and move like a single unified organism. Some mannerisms are wide of the mark, such as fleetness of pulse in the rushed *Largo* of the Quartet in G. The *Gratioso* in the Concerto in A for



Nikolaus Harnoncourt ensures that Concentus Musicus's shaping 'never lapses into mere formula'

flute, violin and cello feels too clipped at first, but cellist Phoebe Carrai's emergence from the texture to deliver a rapturous solo passage is delightful; the *concertante* trio play with a rare delicacy that makes Telemann's musical imagination seem half a century ahead of its time. Goebel and Manfred Krämer's intricate violins in the Trio Sonata in E flat seem blessed by telepathic intuition, even if the results become fussily disjointed. In Production II, Friedemann Immer's

lightly bubbling staccato trumpet is integrated as an equal voice within a conversational chamber texture (an approach entirely different from his fulsome playing on Harnoncourt's version). There is plenty of fantasy and versatility in musical articulation and mood, and the triple violin concerto – starring Goebel, Krämer and Florian Deuter – is a veritable masterclass on how baroque bows and gut strings can be used with an infinite variety of phrasings

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

RECORDING DATE / ARTISTS	RECORD COMPANY (REVIEW DATE)
1964-65 Concerto Amsterdam / Brüggem	Warner Classics (S) (4) 2564 69457-2 (7/67, 10/95)
1964-65 Schola Cantorum Basiliensis / Wenzinger	Decca Eloquence (S) (4) ELQ482 5864 (5/65, 8/65, 11/65, 3/81)
1977 concertos Collegium Aureum / Maier	Deutsche Harmonia Mundi (P) (D) 05472 77467-2
1985 excerpts Amsterdam Baroque Orch / Koopman	Erato (S) (2) 2564 69838-1 (8/88)
1986-87 Production III Il Fondamento / Dombrecht	Christophorus (S) (4) CHE02002 (8/88)
1986, 1988 Concentus Musicus Wien / Harnoncourt	Warner Classics (S) (4) 2564 68704-1 (10/89)
1987 excerpts The King's Consort / King	Hyperion (M) (M) CDH55278 (12/89)
1988 Musica Antiqua Köln / Goebel	Archiv Produktion (S) (4) 477 8714AB4 (10/89)
1992-93 Camerata of the 18th Century / Hünteler	Dabringhaus und Grimm (M) (4) MDG311 0580-2
1995 Orch of the Golden Age	Naxos (S) (4) 8 504022 (A/98, 7/99, 8/99, A/99 - aas)
1997 Production I - exc quartet Arion	Analekta (M) (D) FL2 3118
2002 excerpts Florilegium	Channel Classics (P) (S) CCSSA19102 (2/03)
2003 Musica Amphion / Belder	Brilliant Classics (S) (4) 92177
2009 Freiburg Baroque Orch / Mülleijans, von der Goltz	Harmonia Mundi (S) (4) HMC90 2042/5 (1/11)



DUTTON EPOCH NEW RELEASE



CDLX 7340

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Scott of the Antarctic: the complete score

It is a revelation to hear every note that Vaughan Williams wrote, late in 1947, for the then unmade film *Scott of the Antarctic*. There have been previous attempts to revisit some of the unused music he sketched for the film, but now conductor Martin Yates, with the support of the composer's estate, has transcribed from the original manuscripts all the music, comprising some 41 beautifully rounded numbers. Vaughan Williams subsequently reworked some of this material in the *Sinfonia Antartica*, but on this recording we are able to hear for the first time his vivid reaction to the story, before the film was even shot. Standing independently beside the *Sinfonia Antartica*, this is a gripping symphonic experience in its own right.



CDLX 7342

ARTHUR BLISS

WILLIAM WALTON (original version)

Concertos for Violin and Orchestra

The Walton and the Bliss Violin Concertos make a compelling programme, given added interest here by the revival of the original version of the Walton Concerto, unheard since the early 1940s. After the earliest performances, Walton rescored it without altering the solo part, and in this superb new recording featuring the eloquent violin of Lorraine McAslan, we can fully appreciate the composer's first thoughts, which perhaps are more a reflection of the pre-Second World War musical world. The Bliss Concerto remains the most impressive British violin concerto not in the day-to-day repertoire, and Lorraine McAslan not only underlines its lyrical qualities but also plays the complete version, reinstating the minor cuts that are sometimes made.



CDLX 7338

HUBERT CLIFFORD

The Cowes Suite and other works

Australian-born Hubert Clifford started his musical career in Melbourne but came to England in 1930 and remained there for the rest of his career. He taught music in a boys' grammar school, moved to the BBC and then became Alexander Korda's music director at London Films, ending as the BBC's Head of Light Music. This exploration of Clifford's music, covering a 30-year span, presents his tuneful early orchestral works written in Melbourne, including *Dargo: A Mountain Rhapsody*, a glorious Moeranesque evocation of his childhood home. Two of his film scores, *Left of the Line* and *Hunted*, and his commission for the BBC's 1958 Light Music Festival, *The Cowes Suite*, which celebrates famous yachtsman Uffa Fox, provide colourful contrast.



CDLX 7339

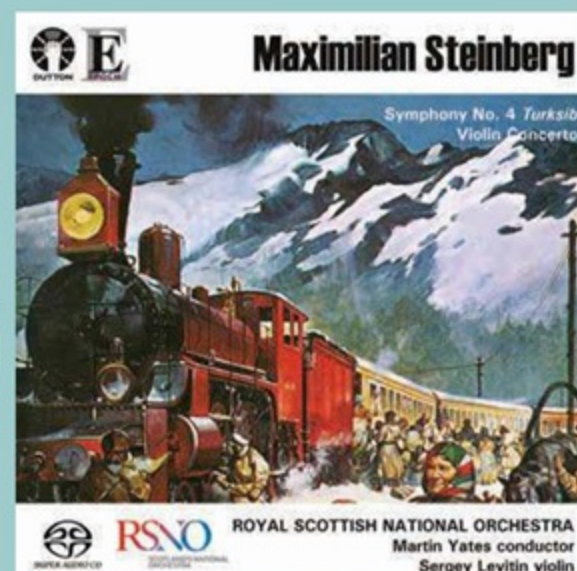
Cécile Chaminade

Callirhoë: Ballet Symphonique Concertstück for piano and orchestra

CDLX 7341

Maximilian Steinberg

Symphony No. 4 *Turksib* Violin Concerto



The year 1888 was a remarkable one for French pianist-composer Cécile Chaminade. Her large-scale "ballet symphonique" *Callirhoë* was produced at Marseilles on 16 March, and a few weeks later, on 18 April, there followed the *Concertstück for piano and orchestra*, well received in Antwerp and soon across the world. Here they make a cherishable coupling, and *Callirhoë* is recorded in its complete form for the first time, proving to be a delightful and varied discovery. Chaminade is remembered for her many piano miniatures and *mélodies*, but soloist Victor Sangiorgio's brilliant performance in the *Concertstück for piano and orchestra* reminds us of what a romantic and affecting composer Chaminade could be when given an extended musical canvas.

For full release details visit
www.duttonvocalion.co.uk
Many titles in the Dutton Epoch series
are available on iTunes

Dutton Epoch
PO Box 609 | Watford WD18 7YA
T: 01923 803 001
info@duttonvocalion.co.uk

The BBC Concert Orchestra and BBC Radio 3 logos
are trademarks of the BBC and are used under licence.

Maximilian Steinberg was a pupil – and son-in-law – of Rimsky-Korsakov in pre-Revolutionary Russia, exhibiting all the orchestral and lyrical characteristics one might expect of such a heritage. (Steinberg himself would later be a teacher of Shostakovich.) The *Turksib* Symphony – his fourth – completed in 1933, celebrates the building of the Turkestan-Siberia Railway. Using Kazakh folk melodies and in four richly scored movements, it is an inspiring discovery. Contrastingly, Steinberg's final work, the post-war Violin Concerto, has a valedictory and autumnal feeling, and soloist Sergey Levitin encompasses the virtuosic writing with complete authority while finding the music's passionate and romantic manner.



Petra Mülleians and Gottfried von der Goltz lead the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra with 'utmost charm'

and personalities. In Production III, the overture-suite's *Presto* is dizzyingly quick and extraordinarily light, and it is amazing how Michael Niesemann and Eherhard Zummach get around the rapid oboe passages effortlessly in the *Allégresse*. Goebel's mincing gait in the *Postillons* lacks rusticity but he springs some humorous surprises.

LESS APPETISING MORSELS - TOPPED BY A BONNE BOUCHE

In comparison with these dizzying heights, the **Camerata of the 18th Century** – mostly featuring Dutch players from Brüggens's Orchestra of the 18th Century – is dully formulaic. A fulsome bloom on MDG's sound recording gives the music spacious warmth that ensures the use of single strings in full 'orchestral' pieces always has an appealing resonance distinct from *concertante* elements. Flautist Konrad Hünteler's direction and the ensemble's playing are easy to live with – there is nothing wrong with steady tempos, but the pedestrian mood never scales the highest peaks of Telemann's humour, cleverness and theatricality. Manchester's **Orchestra of the Golden Age** has slightly less consistent standards of string- and woodwind-playing, perhaps on account of the entire collection being recorded rapidly in one intense cluster of sessions – but their unforced and natural performances are engaging. The trio sonata for two violins (Production I) exposes the brittle discomfort occasionally caused by the closely miked recording, literalness restricts the affective impact of some

chamber sonatas, and the triple violin concerto lacks rhythmical vivacity; but high points include David Blackadder's peerless natural trumpet-playing (Production II's overture-suite) and the braying horns of Roger Montgomery and Gavin Edwards (the concerto in Production III).

The Dutch ensemble **Musica Amphion**, directed by harpsichordist Pieter-Jan Belder, is more consistently successful. It includes experienced players from the Orchestra of the 18th Century, the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, the Netherlands Bach Society, the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music and Zefiro, and such a pedigree is evident in routinely accomplished performances that show an admirable facility for realising interesting ideas. In the triple concerto from Production I, Wilbert Hazelzet (flute), Rémy Baudet (violin) and Jaap ter Linden (cello) impeccably realise harmonic contours and shapeshifting transitions. In the second overture-suite, duo passages played by William Wroth (trumpet) and Frank de Bruine (oboe) sparkle with *joie de vivre*, and the triple violin concerto achieves the perfect paradox of brimming convivially while also being spacious within its density. In Production III, Teunis van der Zwart and Erwin Wieringa produce fantastic trills and masterfully shaded effects on natural horns in the concerto; and Alfredo Bernardini characterises the oboe sonata with soulful melancholy or witty agility, as each movement demands.

The **Freiburg Baroque Orchestra**, directed by concertmasters Petra Mülleians and Gottfried von der Goltz, raised the benchmark to an unprecedented high level. The string band is a little larger than Harnoncourt's or Goebel's, but, more crucially, it is used with tender finesse. In Production I, the spirit of French ballet music is omnipresent during the overture-suite; the Quartet in G has a touching emotional intimacy; the concerto soloists Mülleians, Karl Kaiser (flute) and Guido Larisch (cello) play with unsurpassed sophistication; and the Italianate trio sonata is played eloquently by violinists von der Goltz and Anne Katharina Schreiber. Production II's overture-suite is a congenial conversation between the orchestra, *concertante* strings, oboist Ann-Kathrin Brüggemann and trumpeter Immer (who, once again, plays the part entirely differently from his previous recordings). The choice of bassoon (Eyal Streett) for the top line in the D minor Quartet (instead of the customary option of a recorder) creates a rapturous texture with two flutes (Karl and Susanne Kaiser), viola da gamba (Hille Perl), lute (Lee Santata) and harpsichord (Torsten Johann). The triple violin concerto is played with light-footed suppleness that places the soloists within the fabric of an integrated musical discourse, and Johann's use of a lute stop is as crucial to the success of the Vivaldian *Largo* as the elegiac playing of the fiddlers. In Production III, the Freiburgers make a virtue of the rising octave motif in the *Postillons* (taken very quickly), the *Dolce* of the Quartet in E minor for flute, violin and cello has exquisite delicacy, and the orchestra makes better use than anyone else of the harmonic dissonances during the extraordinary slow *Grave* at the heart of the double horn concerto. Everything regarding tempos, stylistic idioms and musical personalities is consistently well judged with the utmost naturalness and charm. This will be a tough act to follow, but there can be little doubt that Telemann's winsome yet deceptively challenging *Musique de table* will continue to attract admirers. ⑥

TOP CHOICE

Freiburg Baroque Orchestra / Mülleians & von der Goltz

Harmonia Mundi ⑤ ④ HMC90 2042/5

With the wisdom and lyricism of Harnoncourt



(without Goebel's capriciousness) and the extraordinary technical standards of Goebel (without Harnoncourt's rough edges), this is practically perfect.

PERFORMANCES & EVENTS

Presenting live concert and opera performances from around the world, and reviews of archived music-making available online to stream when you want, where you want

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden & UK cinemas

Jonas Kaufmann sings *Otello*, June 28

This new production of Verdi's *Otello* from director Keith Warner has been widely anticipated. First because tenor Jonas Kaufmann is making his role debut as *Otello*, and secondly because Warner is not following operatic convention with regard to making his *Otello* wear black make-up. Instead, following in the footsteps of English National Opera in 2014 and the Metropolitan Opera in 2015, Kaufmann will appear as he is. He's joined by the soprano Maria Agresta as Desdemona and the baritone Ludovic Tézier as Iago, and Covent Garden's Music Director Antonio Pappano conducts.

roh.org.uk/showings

Tonhalle Grosser Saal, Zürich & Radio SRF2 Kultur

Philippe Herreweghe conducts Bach, Mendelssohn and Schubert, June 28

Renowned period-performance specialist Philippe Herreweghe has quite a number of wonderful Mendelssohn recordings to his name, including his 2010 recording for Pentatone of the two piano concertos, and it's the soloist on that recording, Martin Helmchen, who joins him and Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra for Piano Concerto No 2. Titled 'Orchestra magic', the programme also

includes Contrapunctus I and IV from Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge*, and Schubert's *Unfinished* Symphony (No 8). If you can't catch it live, Radio SRF2 Kultur are recording the concert for future broadcast, on July 20.

tonhalle-orchester.ch,
srf.ch/radio-srf2-kultur

Skegness, Oxford, Ramsgate, Bridgwater

Garsington tours free public screenings of its Handel *Semele*, July 1, 22 & 29

Those who didn't get to hear Garsington Opera's production of Handel's *Semele* last month at their Buckinghamshire home base can now experience it instead via free public screenings this month at Skegness's SO Festival (July 1), Oxford's Festival of the Arts (July 1), the Ramsgate Festival (July 22) and Bridgwater Quayside Festival (July 29) as part of the company's 'Opera for All' initiative. Each screening location will also have a large-scale education and outreach work attached. The production itself has a great line-up, too. Annilese Miskimmon, Artistic Director of Norwegian National Opera, directs, under the musical direction of Jonathan Cohen, making his Garsington Opera conducting debut. *Semele* is sung by the American soprano Heidi Stober in what will be her UK and role debuts, the tenor Robert Murray makes a role debut as Jupiter, and the mezzo Christine Rice sings Juno. garsingtonopera.org, operaforall.org

Glyndebourne, UK cinemas & online

New opera of *Hamlet*, July 6

As part of their commitment to bringing their productions to as many people as possible, Glyndebourne are once again screening selected productions in UK cinemas, including this live transmission of the opening night of one of their season highlights, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski: a brand new operatic retelling of *Hamlet* by the Australian composer, conductor and viola-player Brett Dean. Directed by Neil Armfield, who also directed Dean's successful first opera *Bliss* back in 2010, it features a libretto by Matthew Jocelyn and a cast including the tenor Allan Clayton as Hamlet, Sarah Connolly as Gertrude and Barbara Hannigan as Ophelia, in what will be her Glyndebourne debut. John Tomlinson sings The Ghost of Old Hamlet. Furthermore, if you're not fussed about seeing this on a big screen, you can catch it via video live stream both on the Glyndebourne and *Telegraph* websites.

glyndebourne.com, telegraph.co.uk

Nationaltheater, Munich & online at staatsoper.tv

Kirill Petrenko conducts *Tannhäuser*, July 9

If the Italian avant-garde director Romeo Castellucci lives up to his reputation then you may need to prepare to be shocked by his new production of *Tannhäuser* for the

ONLINE OPERA REVIEW

Mussorgsky's unfinished *Sorochintsy Fair* gets an ideal production from Barrie Kosky and Komische Oper Berlin

Mussorgsky

Characteristically, Mussorgsky never finished *Sorochintsy Fair*, his grotesque Gogol comedy. Barrie Kosky chooses Pavel Lamm's 1932 edition, completed by Vissarion Shebalin, but tacks on extra numbers to give his excellent Komische Oper chorus plenty of work in his new production.

In *Sorochintsy*, young peasant Gritsko (tenor Alexander Lewis, singing with great tenderness) loves Parasya (sparky soprano Mirka Wagner), but the girl's stepmother Khivrya (Agnes Zwiwerko, having splendid fun camping it up) opposes the match, wanting to marry her off to the priest's wealthy son. Meanwhile, a devil brings havoc



to the small Ukrainian town, enabling Gritsko to eventually win Parasya's hand in marriage.

Kosky directs surrealist comedy wonderfully, so it's little surprise that Gritsko's diabolical dream – a choral setting of the familiar *Night on the Bare*

Mountain – has a chorus of priests wearing pigs' heads crowded around a lavish banquet table. There's also a *Friends* tribute when the priest's son wears a turkey carcass on his head!

Kosky pads out this slight folkloric tale with three of the *Songs and Dances of Death*. He tops and tails the opera with a choral version of the Hebrew Song by Mussorgsky's friend and flatmate, Rimsky-Korsakov, especially haunting when lit by candles on the set's reflective surface. *Sorochintsy Fair* is no forgotten masterpiece, but Kosky ensures it's enjoyable fun.

Mark Pullinger

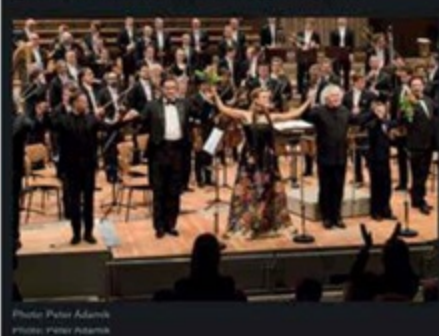
Available to view for free (until October 1) at theoperaplatform.eu

Sir Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic take on their second Puccini opera together

Puccini

Packed up and shipped to Berlin, the personnel of the Baden-Baden Easter Festival's new *Tosca* here present Puccini's melodrama in the more rarefied atmosphere of the Philharmonie. For many it'll be the chance of seeing and hearing the Berlin Philharmonic in this score that will be the great attraction of this concert. Under their Principal Conductor they indeed play with wonderful polish, class and punch. And, three years after they tackled *Manon Lescaut*, Simon Rattle shows himself an impressive and instinctive Puccinian: there's a generous

Simon Rattle conducts "Tosca"



22/04/2017

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER
SIR SIMON RATTLE

Kristine Opolais, Stefano La Colla, Evgeny Nikitin

Giacomo Puccini
Tosca (concert performance)

Kristine Opolais Soprano (Flora Tosca), Stefano La Colla Tenor (Mario Cavaradossi), Evgeny Nikitin Bass Baritone (Baron Scarpia), Alexander Tsymbalyuk Bass (Cesare Angelotti), Peter Tantsits Tenor (Spoleto), Douglas Williams Bass (Sclerone), Maurizio Muraro Bass (Sacristan), Walter Fink Bass (Jailer), Giuseppe Mantello Boy Soprano (Shepherd Boy), Kinderchor der Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Vinzenz Weissenburger Chorus Master, Rundfunkchor Berlin, David Jones Chorus Master

sweep to his conducting, as well as real dramatic fire.

It's a shame that there's no attempt at a semi-staging. The cast all naturally sing off score, and the leading couple are permitted some light canoodling, but otherwise physical interaction is limited. As *Tosca*, though, Kristine Opolais is such

a formidable actress that it hardly matters. She brings the drama alive, even if the voice never really convinces as an authentic *spinto*. Stefano La Colla is the real deal as Cavaradossi, though – the tone beautifully honeyed, the delivery schooled and stylish, the top notes trumpeting. Evgeny Nikitin's unrefined,

increasingly ragged Scarpia is a disappointment, but not so much as to spoil the riches on display elsewhere.

Hugo Shirley

Available via various subscription packages to the Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall, from seven days (€9.90) to 12 months (€149), at digitalconcerthall.com

Bavarian State Opera. However, it's also likely to be very powerful and thought provoking, particularly with this top-drawer cast of artists. On the conductor's podium is Staatsoper General Music Director Kirill Petrenko (who succeeds Sir Simon Rattle at the Berlin Philharmonic next season). The cast includes Georg Zuppenfeld as Hermann, Klaus Florian Vogt as Tannhäuser, Christian Gerhaher as Wolfram von Eschenbach and Anja Harteros singing Elisabeth. This is the final performance of the production's Munich run, before they take it to Japan's NHK Hall in September.

Staatsoper.de/tv

Royal Hall, Harrogate & BBC Radio 3

Van Kuijk Quartet at the Harrogate Music Festival, July 9

Back in 2015 the French Van Kuijk Quartet won first prize at the triennial Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, along with the associated Best Beethoven and Best Haydn prizes. They're currently part of the 2015-17 intake of the BBC's New Generation Artists scheme, and it's under this banner that they're performing in Harrogate, in a concert recorded by BBC Radio 3 for broadcast soon afterwards. Their programme features Mozart's String Quartet No 19 in C, K465, Webern's *Langsamer Satz* in E flat and Brahms's Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op 115, for which they're joined by fellow BBC New Generation Artist, the Belgian clarinetist Annelien Van Wauwe.

harrogateinternationalfestivals.com,
bbc.co.uk/radio3

National Centre for Early Music, York & BBC Radio 3

York Early Music International Young Artists Competition, July 12-15

This biennial period-performance competition invites applications from instrumental and vocal ensembles of two or more musicians. Among its covetable first prize opportunities are a recording on Linn Records (won by the Solazzo ensemble in 2015), and a route into the prestigious *emerging* (Emerging European Ensembles) project. On July 13-14 each group will present an informal recital, then the actual competition is on July 15. This is both live streamed and recorded by BBC Radio 3, highlights to be broadcast on *The Early Music Show*. UK-based entrants this year include the vocal ensemble the Fieri Consort, and the instrumental Ensemble Molière, whose international line-up was formed while participating at the Dartington International Summer School.

ncem.co.uk, bbc.co.uk/radio3

Carnegie Hall, New York & medici.tv

Marin Alsop conducts the National Youth Orchestra of the USA, July 21

Each country has its own orchestral training ground for its brightest young musicians, and this streamed concert is a chance for Europe-based readers to hear America's. Interestingly, the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America is run by the Weill Music Institute, the department at Carnegie Hall devoted to education and outreach, and as a result it's Carnegie Hall where the orchestra performs its major annual summer concert. This year Marin Alsop conducts, in a programme featuring John Adams's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, a new work by Gabriela Lena Franck commissioned by Carnegie Hall, and Mahler's Symphony No 1. carnegiehall.org, medici.tv

St Florian's Basilica, Sankt Florian, Austria & ORF Radio

Herbert Blomstedt conducts Bruckner's Symphony No 5 in Bruckner's burial place, July 22

Amongst the Honorary Conductor positions held by Bruckner authority Herbert Blomstedt is one with the Bamberg Symphony, and to mark his 90th birthday he's touring Bruckner's Symphony No 5 with them, encompassing four cathedrals in Germany and Austria. They begin in Bamberg Cathedral on July 19, move to St Kilian Cathedral in Würzburg on July 20, and Passau Cathedral on July 21. However we want to particularly highlight the tour's July 22 climax in St Florian's Basilica near Linz, because this happens to be where Bruckner was a choirboy and later organist, and is buried, and it's been a long-held dream of Blomstedt's to unite this orchestra with this repertoire at this location. Austria's ORF Radio will broadcast the concert either live or at a later date.

radio.orf.at

BBC Proms, Royal Albert Hall & BBC Radio 3

Stephen Hough in Brahms and a David Sawers revival, July 29

Two standout reasons to tune in to (or indeed head down to!) Prom 20. Firstly the ever-superb Stephen Hough in Brahms's Piano Concerto No 1; secondly the first performance to emerge from the PRS Foundation's Resonate fund, which supports ensembles in giving a high-profile revival to a work of British music from the past 25 years that they feel has been neglected. Mark Wigglesworth conducts the BBC Philharmonic.

bbc.co.uk/radio3



BRODMANN

ACOUSTICS



Vienna has always been one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It's stunning continental architecture, numerous parks, and world-renowned arts and cultural institutions have enchanted guests for centuries. Could there be a more suitable place for the company headquarters of The Joseph Brodmann Group?

The name of Joseph Brodmann is a driving force behind our uniqueness and our high expectation towards quality. In 18th century Vienna, he earned widespread acclaim for excellence in piano making and in furthering the development of piano soundboards. Among the friends and customers of the Brodmann house were Ludwig van Beethoven and Carl Maria von Weber. Ignaz Bösendorfer learned the high art of piano making from him and became Brodmann's most famous pupil. By 1828, his manufacturing process was considered one of the most innovative and modern of its time.

Designed by Hans Deutsch is many years of experience and ideal of perfection are evident in all the Joseph Brodmann speakers.

The stunning range from the FS to the JB205 their sound is as amazing as the finish on the cabinets. The in and on wall speakers can have the finish of your dreams be this to match your wall or a picture you admire.



For your nearest dealer call 0203 5442338

More fantastic products from NuNu Distribution Limited

www.nunudistribution.co.uk

NuNu Distribution Ltd



HIGH FIDELITY

● THE TECHNOLOGY THAT MAKES THE MOST OF YOUR MUSIC ●

THIS MONTH All-in-one streaming solutions from two names new to the UK market, and how brands are brought to a wider audience **Andrew Everard, Audio Editor**

AV receivers embrace streaming features

With increased network capabilities, surround amplifiers become comprehensive entertainment hubs

There's a lot of action on the AV receiver front of late, with new models being launched and existing ones gaining more features via firmware downloads. As well as delivering the latest surround soundtracks, including the 3D audio of Dolby Atmos and DTS:X, it's now possible for them to sit at the heart of network music systems.

Pioneer, for example, has launched a trio of new receivers complete with the enhanced surround formats and network music, including Spotify and Tidal as well as internet radio, starting with the £449 VSX-832 **1**, which is a 5.1-channel design with Dolby Atmos Surround Enhancer to create the effect of a full 3D surround system using digital signal processing and a conventional six-speaker set-up. Above that sits the VSX-932, which at £50 more is a full 7.1-channel design offering 'real' 5.1.2-channel sound complete with height channels for the three-dimensional effect. Like the 5.1-channel model, it offers 130W per channel, while the £699 VSX-LX302 adds enhanced digital-to-analogue conversion, Zone 2 outputs, a second subwoofer output and 170W per channel. All these models support hi-res audio.



Both Pioneer and stablemate Onkyo have announced firmware updates for a range of models, activating Chromecast built-in audio streaming to allow audio to be sent from compatible apps on smartphones and tablets, as well as the Chrome browser on PCs, Macs and Linux computers. The update also gives voice control with Google Home devices, allowing the ability to ask the device to play music and have it delivered through the Onkyo and Pioneer products. Onkyo models for which the update is available include the TX-NR676E/656/575E/555/474 AV receivers **2**; Pioneer models include the SC-LX901/801/701/501, the VSX-LX302 and the VSX-1131/932/832/831.

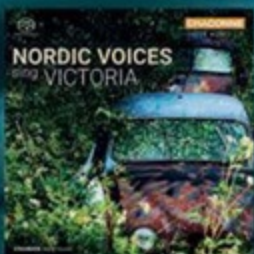
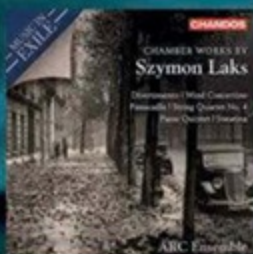
Melco has updated its range of digital audio storage/player models with MkII models enhanced for local playback straight into a digital-to-analogue converter, as well as network streaming. Improved software makes operation more logical. The range starts with the £2099 N1AH60/2 **3**, which comes with 6TB of internal storage, while the N1ZS20/2 flagship model, with a range of mechanical and electrical isolation strategies and two 1TB 'audiophile grade' SSD storage devices, is £7700.

Finally this month, two approaches to Bluetooth speaker design. The Beoplay P2 **4** is Bang & Olufsen's smallest model to date, measuring just 14x8x2.8cm and weighing 275g. Made from polymer, pearl-blasted aluminium, leather and rubber, it uses 2x15W Class D amps for its separate woofer and tweeter, features gesture and touch control, and sells for £149.

Rather larger is the Master & Dynamic MA770 **5**, which is designed by architect Sir David Adjaye and sells for £1600. Made from a proprietary concrete composite, it uses twin 10cm Kevlar long-throw woofers and a 3.8cm titanium dome tweeter, powered by Class D amplification, measures 41x51x24.5cm and weighs 16kg. **6**

CHANDOS
THE SOUND OF CLASSICAL

DOWNLOAD the finest classical releases from more than 50 LABELS



MP3, LOSSLESS, STUDIO, SURROUND • ALL FORMATS TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR HI-FI

VISIT OUR WEBSITE for CDs, downloads and much more

www.chandos.net

YouTube

FOLLOW US FOR

New releases • Reviews • Special offers • Artist features

FEBRUARY TEST DISCS



A fine set of performances of pieces by Clara Schumann, delicately played by Mika Sasaki and with a detailed, vibrant recording from Yarlung Records



Captivating recordings by the Kammerorchester Basel, sounding crisp, clean and dynamic in 96kHz/24bit on Deutsche Harmonia Mundi

● **REVIEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH**

AVM Inspiration CS 2.2

It's a new name to the UK, and among its first products is this very appealing all-in-one network audio system

German manufacturer AVM has been in business for over 30 years, but has only just made it to the UK, courtesy of loudspeaker company PMC, which has just taken on distribution here. And as a result of that three-decade history AVM comes in with an extensive catalogue: there are 30 products, arranged in three ranges, and within those line-ups there seems to be quite a bit of duplication. AVM kicks off with the Inspiration range, moves up through Evolution and finally arrives at its flagship Ovation offering, but even looking at the simplest part of the range, the entry-level Inspiration from which the £3995 CS 2.2 we have here is taken, there seems to be a trio of very similar models.

Ask AVM chief Udo Besser what's going on here, and he'll explain that a lot of this is down to the way the company builds its products, all of which are hand-assembled in Germany. Modular construction is the key, allowing different models to be designed around the same building-blocks, each aimed at a slightly different target-market.

Thus the CS 2.2 is a compact all-in-one system combining a CD player, FM tuner, DAC and network player, partnered with an amplifier delivering a healthy 165W per channel, which should be more than

adequate for most needs. Take a step down to the C 2.2, at £3870, and you get a similar specification but minus the network capability and the option for remote control using a phone/tablet app; move down another £200 and you have the SD 2.2, which drops the CD player and power

Modular construction is the key – different models are designed around the same building-blocks, each aimed at a slightly different market

amplification to create a network streaming player/DAC/preamp. And if you think that's confusing, don't look further up the range: Evolution has six variations on the player/amplifier theme, and there are five in the Ovation line. Oh, and a high-end music server!

Anyway...what we have in the Inspiration CS 2.2 is a compact – just 34cm wide – unit, finished to the usual AVM standards in high-quality metalwork, and with a simple front-panel layout comprising a large, easily read display and a substantial sunken control straddling the slot-loading CD drive, plus a few buttons for more detailed operation and a 3.5mm headphone socket. 'Hard' buttons access source input,

AVM INSPIRATION CS 2.2



Type CD/streaming system

Price £3995

Sources CD, network audio, internet radio, streaming services including Qobuz and Tidal (subject to subscription), FM radio

Inputs MM/MC phono, three line, optical/coaxial digital, USB for memory devices

Outputs One pair of speakers, line out, preamp out, optical/coaxial digital, headphones

Formats handled MP3, WMA, AAC, OGG Vorbis, FLAC/WAV/AIFF (192kHz/32-bit via LAN), ALAC (96/24 via LAN)

Power output 165W per channel in to 4ohms, 110Wpc into 8 ohms

Accessories supplied RCS remote handset, Wi-Fi antenna. RC 9 remote control and app control optional

Dimensions (WxHxD) 34x8x35cm

avm-audio.com

HI-FI | HOME CINEMA | AUTOMATED SOLUTIONS



Based conveniently in central Guildford PJ Hi-Fi has specialised in the demonstration, provision and installation of quality hi-fi and home cinema for over 20 years. Our dedicated demonstration rooms allow you to listen in comfort to a range of exceptional products, whilst our friendly and knowledgeable staff are always on hand to answer any questions you may have. Whether you are looking for your first genuine hi-fi system, want to create a bespoke home cinema or wish to distribute music and movie throughout your house, PJ Hi-Fi can provide a solution to suit all budgets and criteria. As a truly independent retailer we are proud to say that we hand select, test and scrutinise all the products that we supply, ensuring a consistent standard of quality and reliability over our entire range of equipment. Drop in today to discuss your requirements or phone / email us to book a demonstration.

Tel: 01483 504801 | www.pjhifi.co.uk | **Email:** info@pjhifi.co.uk
3 Bridge Street | Guildford | Surrey GU1 4RY



SUGGESTED PARTNERS

The Inspiration CS 2.2 is an all-in-one – just add speakers and some storage

SYNOLOGY DS216

With its network capability, stream all your music from cost-effective storage solutions such as this Synology DS216



PMC'S TWENTY5.22 STANDMOUNTERS

Small speakers with a big sound: PMC's twenty5.22 standmounters will work well with the AVM



while multifunctional 'soft' buttons below the display have their operation modified by the menus. The standard finish is natural silver aluminium, but black with silver controls is available to order.

As well as all the flexibility within, which extends to access for streaming services including Tidal and Qobuz, along with network stored music and internet radio, the CS 2.2 has optical and coaxial digital inputs, a phono stage switchable for moving magnet and moving coil cartridges, and three line-ins. Fixed and variable analogue outputs are provided, as well as a single set of speaker connections and – should you need them – both optical and coaxial digital outputs. Network connectivity is via both wired Ethernet and Wi-Fi, for which a stubby antenna is provided, and content can also be played from USB drives using a socket clearly labelled as 'Stick/HDD'.

Alongside that modular design, AVM makes extensive use of parts either made for its products or customised to the company's requirements. The CD drive here, for example, isn't the usual DVD-ROM device found in many components these days for reasons of economy, but rather a dedicated CD-only device made to AVM specifications by Japanese manufacturer TEAC, and further damped with a felt coating to exclude vibrations.

Yes, such a drive is a more expensive option, but AVM feels the cost implications are worthwhile – and that modular approach means the same drive is used from this model all the way up to the flagship Ovation CS 8.2, meaning the company can buy the component in bulk, making the customisation a worthwhile project for a manufacturer the size of TEAC.

PERFORMANCE

There's something very precise and purposeful about the way the AVM does things: the controls have a smoothness and weight about them that inspires confidence, and the self-check routine the unit does when you first fire it up adds to the feeling of solid engineering.

What's more, that sense of sure-footedness extends to the sound of

the Inspiration CS 2.2: Udo Besser is admirably candid about the fact the presentation of his company's products is tailored for ease of musical enjoyment, and that he's no fan of the 'maximum detail' approach many listeners find irritating, and the way this system plays music is as euphonious as it is fulfilling. That substantial power output – into 4ohms, the 8ohm figure being 110Wpc – combines with a healthy damping factor to ensure there's more than enough in reserve to handle the dynamics of music while at the same time delivering tight rhythms. What's more, while the sound is definitely on the warm side of neutral, the balance is handled deftly to keep things rich and full rather than in any way overlush or slow.

What that means is this compact system is not only able to drive large speakers, but do so to impressive effect, delivering the scale of orchestral music while at the same time having admirable focus when handling smaller ensembles or solo instrumental recordings. Timbres are generous but persuasive, and the clarity is never in question, whether it's the shaping of individual notes or the audibility of what's being sung in vocal performances.

The warmth here undeniably makes the AVM an easy listen, with not a hint of that brashness some hear in high-end equipment, and yet the system delivers all the detail required to make it as fine a hi-fi experience as it is a musical one.

And it sounds just as impressive when playing live radio streams via internet radio as it does when playing CDs or hi-res content via network streaming: all content is upsampled to 192kHz/24bit resolution before being handled by the internal DACs.

'Driving' the system via the app is a delight – a conventional handset is standard, and a more sophisticated bi-directional radio-frequency remote a £490 option – and it's simple to get to grips with everything on offer here, despite the very comprehensive nature of the system.

Yes, even this 'entry-level' AVM model carries a substantial price-tag, putting it up against some impressive competition, but the quality of design, engineering and sound here is beyond question, and this is a highly attractive buy. **G**

Or you could try...

With its comprehensive specification, the Inspiration CS 2.2 is a complete home entertainment solution, but it's not without rivals offering similar facilities, at a range of prices.

Naim UnitiAtom

The Naim UnitiAtom, which is part of the company's much-delayed second-generation Uniti streaming system range, promises to offer a highly flexible specification, not least due to the incorporation of Google's Chromecast technology, which will enable it to work with a wide range of streaming and content offerings. It's set to sell for around £1750, and will (hopefully) be in the shops around now. See naimaudio.com for more details.



Convert Technologies Plato

The Convert Technologies Plato is a complete ripper/server/player solution, available in a range of configurations with and without built-in amplification. It can even record from LPs, recognising their contents using online look-up, and will store video as well as audio files. The class B model is £3350 – more details at convert-av.com



Ovation CS 8.2

Finally, if you want to go for really high-end all-in-



one audio, AVM's own flagship model is the £11,695 Ovation CS 8.2, complete with CD playback, streaming at up to DSD128 and a 500W per channel amplifier built-in, along with a valve-powered line input stage using custom-made components.

● REVIEW sonoroHIFI

A heavyweight all-in-one

One-box audio solution lives up to its name with great sound – if you have room for the packaging, that is!

The other week, a friend said to me: 'You're so lucky: it must be like Christmas every day in your house, with all these exciting things turning up out of the blue.' Well, yes, it is, but occasionally the surprise is less welcome. I may have recounted in these pages before the odd 'Where's your forklift, mate?' incident, not to mention the time I opened the front door to find it completely blocked by a pallet containing a 200+kg pair of speakers, with the only sign of the delivery driver being a hand proffering paperwork!

The shock when the sonoroHIFI arrived wasn't quite on that scale, but having accepted the offer of a review sample of this all-in-one audio system, I really wasn't expecting two large boxes, only one of which contained the system itself. The other was for the matching single column stand: you can use the £1249 system without it, for example on a sideboard or table, but there's no denying that stand-mounted the system makes even more of a visual impact.

The sonoroHIFI itself is relatively compact, at 53.6cm wide, and comes in a choice of black or white gloss piano lacquer finishes, with the brushed aluminium stand being available with black or white glass bases to match. It's substantially built, as you'll notice when you heft all 22kg of it out of the box to set it up: this is a very long way from being a run-of-the-mill table radio.

So what exactly is the sonoroHIFI, the flagship of a range from Sonoro starting with the SO110 radio/Bluetooth unit at £249? Well, what it isn't, unfortunately, is a network streaming system, but rather a CD/radio set-up with FM/DAB/DAB+ tuning and aptX Bluetooth (for streaming music from portable devices or suitable computers). That's a little unusual these days, when so much importance is put on Spotify, Tidal and the like – and the company does have internet-enabled radios in its range – but then it's perfectly possible to access these services on a computer or handheld and then Bluetooth the music to the system.

What sets the sonoroHIFI apart, however, is the audio design, which is a fully active system using eight drive units,

each with its own amplification, under the control of digital signal processing for sound optimisation and adjustments. Two 16.5cm bass units – one on each end of the cabinet – are driven by 70W amplifiers, while midband and treble are handled by two 7.5cm mid-range drivers and a dome tweeter, each driven by a 20W amp, for each channel.

The mid/treble arrays are in a classic D'Appolito configuration, with the mid-range drivers straddling the tweeter, and are angled to create a wider soundfield, while the bass units are each tuned with their own reflex port. Oh, and if you need some help setting up the system – the manual is almost 280 pages, though admittedly multilingual! – there are built-in sound samples to aid tuning. There are even some rather new-age sound programmes designed to help you relax or meditate: if I tell you the 'relax' options include ocean surf, whales, rain and wind chimes, you should have some idea whether you view this as a gimmick or a must-have.

There's more than enough weight, clout and conviction here to do justice to orchestral music

As well as the radio, CD playback (using a slot-loading drive) and Bluetooth, the sonoroHIFI also has 3.5mm and RCA phono auxiliary inputs and an optical digital socket – to which one could, for example, connect the sound from a TV or set-top tuner box – and will also play MP3 files burnt on to CD. There's also a headphone socket, while the menu system offers tone and equaliser controls, a variety of sleep and alarm functions and so on.

PERFORMANCE

If the size of the sonoroHIFI – or at least its packaging – came as a surprise, so did its performance. This 'designer' system sounds very good indeed, with little sign of the boxiness or constrained sound-staging I have to admit I feared before firing it up. Rather in the manner of the Neat Iota Alpha speakers I use quite a lot at home, the tilted arrangement of the treble/mid



sonoroHIFI

Type All-in-one CD/radio music system

Price £1249

Internal sources CD, FM/DAB/DAB+ tuner

Inputs aptX Bluetooth, line-in on 3.5mm and RCA phono sockets, optical digital

Power output 3x20W + 70W (per channel)

Outputs Headphones

Accessories supplied Remote handset; matching stand is a £169 option

Finishes black or white

Dimensions (WxHxD) 53.6 x 29.7 x 40cm

en-uk.sonoro.de

arrays here has the effect of making the sound appear to be cast up and out of the enclosure, giving music a much more free-breathing sense and – provided you're not sitting too far from the unit – a credible sense of sound-stage scale and focus.

No, it's not the kind of scale of sound you'd get from a conventional arrangement of speakers placed well apart and toed-in towards the listening position, but the sonoroHIFI does a lot more than simply make a fair stab at the job in hand, and of course has the added benefits of style and convenience on its side. You'd need a particularly good system to get close to this kind of performance for the money and – apart from the likes of the Naim Mu-so – any such system is going to be rather more cumbersome.

There's more than enough weight, clout and conviction here to do justice to orchestral music, while the combination of warmth and openness serves smaller-scale works rather well, with persuasive vocal and instrumental timbres combining with speed and agility to ensure rhythms and instrumental interplay are rendered rather well.

This isn't, perhaps, the system I'd choose if large-scale works at convincing levels were required in a large room, but for what it does – expressive and involving music, with more than enough clarity to fill most modern living spaces – the SonoroHIFI offers an interesting alternative to conventional set-ups. **G**



High tech. Low anxiety.

The **Wax Music Management System**

Complete hardware and software for ripping,
cataloging, playing, and streaming music

A very impressive piece of digital electronics.

Alan Sircom, Editor-in-Chief, Hi-Fi+

There are certainly people who want more than Roon offers in terms of extended metadata. For these people, 3beez has you covered. I spent some very enjoyable time listening to this very good sounding yet relatively modest system. Very nice!

Michael Lavorgna, Editor-in-Chief, AudioStream

I showed Wax to some of my friends who use JRiver/Amarra/Roon, etc. and they couldn't believe it could be done so elegantly and so beautifully, and yet remain so simple. It revolutionizes classical music metadata input.

Jonathan Yung, Writer, HiFi Review

The most sophisticated music management software on the planet. Navigating this thankfully uncluttered main user interface is thoroughly intuitive for even the most tentative computer client. The integration of a streaming source was seamless. Moreover, the system does sound terrific — no question as to its high end creds.

Andrew Quint, Sr. Writer, The Absolute Sound



Great sound. Unlimited metadata.
Integrated Wikipedia. Liner notes.



Everything you need to enjoy your music

3beez

www.3beez.com

● **ESSAY**

There are still hi-fi discoveries to be made

One of the joys of hi-fi is finding something new and exciting, and there are plenty of manufacturers seeking a wider market – and you, as their potential next customer

You'd have thought by now that just about every hi-fi brand in the world would be familiar, but there remain companies famous in some territories but almost unknown elsewhere. Talk to people at some overseas audio events and you occasionally discover this unexpected hi-fi 'language barrier' when you discuss what you use at home, or what you've heard. What's well known in one part of the world, and both acclaimed by critics and users and widely stocked by retailers, may be completely undiscovered outside its 'home territories'.

A couple of things came together to bring that thought to mind while working on this month's audio section. First, I realised that the two products under consideration were from (coincidentally German) manufacturers likely to be unknown to most readers, AVM and Sonoro; and second, I was beginning to receive information and press releases for the annual High End Society show in Munich. Coverage of that show, which has now established itself not just as a major European event but as arguably the world's most important specialist audio event, will follow next month, but it set me thinking of all the brands one encounters at such exhibitions but which aren't more widely distributed.

Speakers are a prime example. Just about every country seems to have a raft of local speaker companies, some of them making some very – umm – striking models unlikely ever to see the light of day in the wider world. In that case, it's not hard to see why: the costs of shipping a huge and heavy pair of speakers halfway around the world are such that what may be high-end in its country of origin ends up as impossibly expensive by the time it's been transported to, and then taxed and distributed in, a foreign location.

Yes, of course there are speakers made in one part of the world and sold in another – after all, many of the speakers sold in the UK are actually made in China or somewhere similar – but the economics only stacks up when one is either shipping the products in thousands, or even better tens of thousands of pairs, or selling a premium product in sufficient



PMC's Pete Thomas (left) decided to bring Udo Besser's AVM range to the UK after hearing the two companies' products demonstrated together at shows around the world

volume to fill containers, not ship as individual items.

As an aside, I was reminded that the hi-fi industry is pretty small-scale (in global terms) by a conversation I had with an acquaintance in a different industry whose boss was pressuring him to speed up a shipment from another part of the world,

What's well known in one part of the world may be completely undiscovered outside its 'home territories'

and who had to explain patiently that theirs wasn't the only container on the ship and that the ship wasn't sailing directly from the suppliers to their warehouse door. When you are shipping just one container among the many on a ship – and modern ships can carry anything up to almost 20,000 'twenty-foot equivalent units', which is how these things are measured, meaning each standard 40ft container is two TEUs – then you have to wait until that ship goes to a major port, probably in

a different country, to land the bulk of its load, which is then sorted and redistributed by smaller vessels.

All of which means shipping hi-fi around the world is quite an expensive – and time-consuming – business unless you're doing so in huge quantities. Add in the costs of providing distribution, support and servicing in remote locations, and you can see why some companies decide to stick to the markets they know best.

So how is that we are now seeing AVM, a long-established German manufacturer well known in its home territory and with a following in countries such as the USA and some Asian territories, finally making an appearance in the UK? Well, as is so often the case, it's all down to personal relationships and a fair degree of happenstance. The new UK distributor of AVM in the UK is PMC, the loudspeaker company founded by ex-BBC man Pete Thomas, with its roots in professional audio – the full name is the Professional Monitor Company – and almost as long a history as its new brand: AVM has been going for over 30 years, PMC for a little over 25, a fact marked by the recent launch of its twenty5 speaker series.

It happens that, in some other markets, the two companies share a common distributor – for example in Taiwan, where they are both handled by Taipei-based Jadex Audio – and so Thomas had seen, and heard, his speakers being used with AVM electronics at various shows around the world. He liked what he heard and could see synergies between the two, even though PMC already has a close working relationship with the Canadian audio company Bryston.

As a result, PMC launched its distributorship of AVM at the Bristol Sound & Vision show back in the spring and, although PMC's Creative Director Keith Tonge says that initially the company will be concentrating on a few of the products, notably the CD/streaming solutions such as the Inspiration CS 2.2 we have for review this month, the AVM catalogue is remarkably comprehensive, running to nearly 30 models. And, based on the performance of the 'entry level' streaming system, the AVM range has much to offer. ⑥

Oranges & Lemons

of Battersea

Home Cinema Hi-Fi & Streaming Multi-Room

020 7924 2040

www.oandlhihi.co.uk 61-63 Webbs Road London SW11 6RX



MusicMatters
Specialists in sound & vision



Visit our website or call us for advice...
musicmatters.co.uk

Birmingham	0121 429 2811
Solihull	0121 742 0254
Leamington Spa	01926 888 644
London	020 8420 1925
Stratford	01789 414 533



IAN EDWARDS

OF HARROGATE Est. 1970

Tel: **01423 500442**
for sales/enquiries or FREE brochure call - 01423 500442
www.iansbespokefurniture.co.uk



Handmade Bespoke Furniture
for CD's • LP's • DVD's & Books

The Old Chapel, 282 Skipton Road,
Harrogate, Yorkshire HG1 3HE

020 7226 5500
www.grahams.co.uk



"One of the five best hi-fi
shops in the world"
ARENA Magazine

Grahams Hi-Fi
Canonbury Yard
190a New North Road
London N1 7BS

Ian Harrison HI FI Sale!

UP TO 40% OFF!

SPECIALIST SUPPLIER OF TURNTABLES, TONEARMS,
CARTRIDGES, PHONO STAGES, RECORD CLEANING
MACHINES, HEADPHONES & CABLES
TEL: 01283 702875 (UK) 9AM - 9PM
EMAIL: IAN.HARRISON@MERCAN.MYZEN.CO.UK

Is this your problem?



Here's your
answer

It's a common problem. The usable range on the volume control is all down at the bottom end and fine control at low listening levels is either difficult or impossible. The noise floor may be audible, too. There is a simple and effective solution - the Rothwell In-Line Attenuators. They can be used with pre/power or integrated amps to cure the problems of excess gain and bring sonic benefits with even the most expensive equipment.

£39/pair - post free
01204 366133 www.rothwellaudioproducts.co.uk



"this accessory
is heartily
recommended"
Gramophone

**To
ADVERTISE
IN THIS
SECTION
PLEASE
CALL
020
7501
6368**

Uk Classical Archives

celebrating 40 years in the gramophone industry

WE BUY

LP & CD collections

Orchestral - Opera - Jazz & Blues

Hi-Fi always required

Turntables - Speakers - Amplifiers

9am - 9pm 7 days a week

01803 606162

we cover UK Ireland & Europe
collection service available

or email your lists to

ukclassicalarchives@gmail.com

**KILKENNY
ARTS
FESTIVAL**

**11-20
AUGUST
2017**

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENTS
NOW ON SALE!

**SCHUBERT:
DREAMING
THE SUBLIME**

AN EPIC 15-CONCERT SERIES

**Iestyn Davies
stars as**

Julius Caesar

**Stephen Rea
in Oscar Wilde's
De Profundis**

**Mr Handel's
Adventures in Ireland
and more...**

FIND OUT MORE & BOOK

kilkennyarts.ie

FULL PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED IN JUNE

arts
council
scholarship
ealaion
funding
festivals
arts council
ie

**Pärnu
Music Festival**

**10/08-17/08/2017
Pärnu, Estonia**

Paavo Järvi, Neeme Järvi
Radu Lupu, Lisa Batiashvili
Estonian Festival Orchestra

www.parnumusicfestival.ee

**0207
689
7533**

LPs + CDs BOUGHT

ANYWHERE IN THE UK
FAIR PRICES PAID

info@watsonrecords.co.uk

WATSON RECORDS

Potton Hall Recording Studio

- Set in Suffolk Countryside 5 miles from Southwold
- First class acoustics and facilities
- Steinway Model 'D' Grand Piano available
- A complete CD package available
- Reasonable rates
- Accommodation/Leisure Spa available on site
- Full Brochure available by request

www.pottonhallltd.co.uk | 01728 648265



revolutions

records and cds

We buy classical LPs
From 1950s - 1970s

Examples - we will pay up to:

£2500 for Leonid Kogan on Columbia SAX

£1500 for Johanna Martzy on Columbia 33CX

£4000 for Andre Levy on Lumen

Top prices paid for EMI ASD, Columbia SAX, Decca SXL.



*Run by musicians
for music lovers*

We will travel to anywhere in the UK to view sizeable collections or can buy by post from your lists.

Quality hi-fi equipment purchased -

EMT - GARRARD - TANNOY - THORENS Etc.

CD Collections also purchased

For prompt attention, contact:

Leslie Laine, BA (hons)

or Dr Matthew Pollard

Revolutions, 1st Floor 67 Victoria Road,

Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1UN

email: info@revolutions33.co.uk

Tel: 01903 209553

www.revolutions33.co.uk

RECORDS FOR SALE

Oriel Opera Archives

'Preserving Our Opera Heritage'

More than 400 British Opera performances from 50 years ago on CD - mostly in English. Now carefully restored.

Great Performances! Great Singing! Great Sound!

Catalogue and free sample CD available from:
Oriel Music Trust, 79 Ffordd Glyder, Port Dinorwic,
Gwynedd LL56 4QX

All profits go to the Musicians Benevolent Fund

opera@orielmusic.org 01248 670 797



Yarborough House
Bookshop and Coffee House

4,000 CDs Rapidly Changing Stock.

Much unusual repertoire. All guaranteed.

Large secondhand general book stock.

We buy interesting LPs, CDs, DVDs and quality books, particularly music, philosophy and literature.

Will collect or pay postage.

No mail order.

Tb S q r e B i s p C a s t l e S h p h r e S Y B N
O p d s a m - p n / C l o c k s & W e d

www.yarboroughhouse.com

01588 638318



SCHOPPER AG
(Switzerland)

The best partner for your Thorens TD 124 !
Restorations & Parts

www.thorens-td124.ch

BUY • SELL • TRADE

vinyl • CDs • DVDs • box sets

nothing legal refused! (ID required)

CLASSICAL MUSIC EXCHANGE

38 Notting Hill Gate, W11, open 7 days 10am - 8pm

www.mgeshops.com

020 7792 5847

SEVENOAKS

Classical Compact Discs and DVDs

The Compact Disc Shop

57 London Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1AU.

01732 740 889 martin@bluesandjazz.co.uk

- A wide range of new releases and back catalogue in stock.
- All Labels - All distributors - Both large and small.
- Full title and artist identification service.

MAIL ORDER

Is a major part of our business. We offer a prompt and efficient delivery usually within 2/3 days.

GIVE US A RING AND TRY OUR SERVICE

- We also stock Jazz, Blues, World music and talking books etc.

Beecham CDs. All the Beecham recordings on CD, both commercial and public performances. Offers to Payling, buyer collects, Loughborough, UK.
Call 01509 844299.

Classical and jazz LPs/CDs wanted.
Can collect or deal by post.

www.esmetronrecords.com
esmetronrecords@btinternet.com

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION
PLEASE CALL 020 7501 6368

NOTES & LETTERS

Performing silence • Pierre Henri in the classroom • Conductor Jiří Bělohlávek remembered

Write to us at Gramophone, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB or gramophone@markallengroup.com

Recalling Louis Frémaux

The recent death of Louis Frémaux (obituary, May, page 132) brings back many fond memories of a highly engaging conductor who brought so much quality to his recordings. During my time running EMI Records' UK Classical Division (1975–84), to have Louis Frémaux in Birmingham and Paavo Berglund in Bournemouth (not forgetting Sir Charles Groves in Liverpool) on our roster – two such contrasting personalities – was a perfect combination at the time for our small team as well as for record collectors both in the UK and abroad.

Frémaux had, as one would expect, a natural affinity with French music, and his recordings of Massenet, Poulenc, Saint-Saëns, Ibert (with some new additions to the catalogue – *Bacchanale*, *Bostoniana* and the *Louisville Concerto*), Bizet (a premiere with the *Roma* Symphony) and Berlioz's Requiem with the newly formed CBSO Chorus were all critically acclaimed and were commercially highly successful.

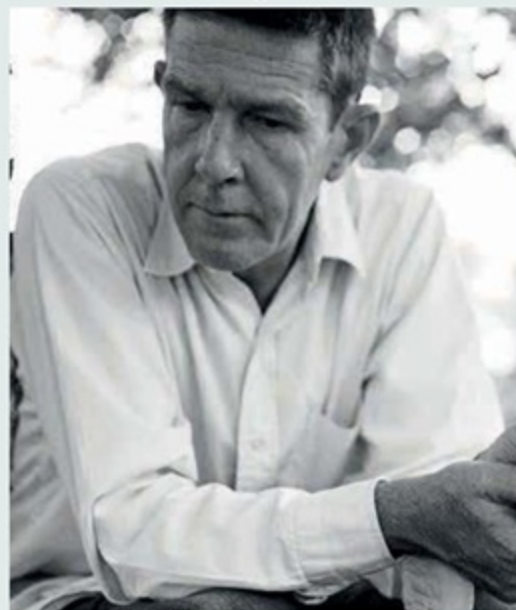
Frémaux was also generally sympathetic to English music, John McCabe's Symphony No 2 being dedicated to him and the CBSO; but it was in the music of William Walton that his Gallic flair produced exciting recordings of *Façade*, *Gloria*, *Orb and Sceptre*, *Crown Imperial* and *Te Deum*. His recording on Collins Classics of Walton's First Symphony is proof enough of his understanding of this composer's works. We had planned to record Britten's *War Requiem* following on from the success of the Berlioz Requiem but events in Birmingham dictated otherwise, which was understandably a source of great sadness for him. It was a privilege to have known and worked with such an endearing man and wonderful musician.

John Patrick
Head of Audio ICA Classics,
via email

Winning Medtner?

It was very interesting to read the article about Marc-André Hamelin by Harriet Smith (April, page 16). I have enjoyed his recordings of Sorabji, Roslavets, Rzewski, Medtner, Haydn and others. I am not sure that Hamelin was the first to perform the complete Medtner piano sonatas however.

Letter of the Month



John Cage: 'What is silence?'

The art of silence

The June issue of *Gramophone* has some thought-provoking things to say about silence. Your editorial recalled the question posed by John Cage – What is silence? – and Andrew Mellor, in his survey of *Belshazzar's Feast* recordings (page 106), gave part of the answer.

Silence can be 'atmospheric'. We don't hear this in Sir Colin Davis's recording from the Barbican, he tells us; by contrast, in Sir Andrew Davis's recording from the Proms, we have 'the palpable atmosphere of...6000 souls standing and breathing during Walton's pregnant rests and general pauses'.

But can one actually perform silences? This intriguing idea is suggested by at least three of your reviewers, who praise or criticise musicians for the way they do just that. Richard Bratby commends the Callino Quartet for their 'beautifully gauged silences' throughout Haydn's *Seven Last Words*; reviewing the Takács Quartet's Beethoven, Rob Cowan is 'especially impressed by how the Takács make silent music of the pauses' in the middle quartets; and Harriet Smith, in a generally favourable review of Javier Perianes's performance of Schubert piano sonatas, complains that 'the silences – such a potent element in [the first movement of D960] – pass for relatively little'.

Donald Mackinnon
Newport, Gwent, Wales

prestoclassical.co.uk is a website that speaks your language, 'underpinned by an evident love of music and the world of recordings' (Gramophone). No other site selling classical CDs and DVDs is arranged in such a logical and accessible format, where you can easily find lists of composers' works, compare different options, view recommendations and read reviews. We believe you will find it one of the most user-friendly classical music sites on the internet. The Letter of the Month receives £50 of Presto Classical gift vouchers. Gramophone reserves the right to edit letters for publication.

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

Hamish Milne recorded them between 1988 and 1994 and Geoffrey Tozer between 1992 and 1998. Marc-André Hamelin recorded them between 1996 and 1998. All these recordings of Medtner have considerable merit and I think that any mention of Medtner recordings ought to include Tozer's and Milne's contribution, as well as Sudbin's and Demidenko's.

John Vernon Lord
Ditchling, Sussex

Harriet Smith replies:

I am glad to hear that John Vernon Lord has enjoyed the wide range of Marc-André Hamelin's recordings. And of course Hamelin is not the only pianist to have championed Medtner: Mr Lord is right to mention Hamish Milne's pioneering

accounts on CRD and Geoffrey Tozer's set on Chandos. However, in terms of dates, Hamelin was in fact the first to release a complete cycle of the sonatas, which were reviewed in the October 1998 issue of *Gramophone*, his recording having been completed in April 1998. The last volume of Milne's sonatas didn't appear until the following year. And Tozer was pipped to the post, the last of his sonatas being released in November 1998. So it was certainly a close-run thing!

Pierre Henri epiphany

I enjoyed reading your article on electronic music (February, page 16), and, in particular, the reference to the French avant-garde composer Pierre Henri, a name rarely mentioned these days. This brought to mind a memory from



Wide-ranging repertoire: Marc-André Hamelin

the beginning of the 1970s. We had a new English teacher at our secondary school in Leeds (Matthew Murray comprehensive, named after a distinguished locomotive engineer of the 19th century). Our first encounter with the teaching methods of Mr Wilson was the playing of a record, a collaboration between Pierre Henri and the British rock band Spooky Tooth. The classroom blinds were pulled down to maximise the experience. You can probably imagine the effect this had on a group of 13/14-year-old boys and girls from working-class districts of Leeds – somewhat awestruck, but very impressed!

Such introductions to the world of music might seem outlandish today and, writing as someone who has spent many years teaching in a secondary school myself, it is difficult to know how such a thing would go down nowadays.

However, as I approach 60, I can see how this early classroom approach had a formative effect on me and helped cultivate a broad and eclectic taste in musical appreciation (including buying and reading *Gramophone* for over 40 years!).

Listening again to the aforementioned recording again, 'An Electronic Mass written by Pierre Henri and performed by Spooky Tooth', I can understand why some regarded it as a flawed experiment at the time, but for all that I still find it captivating.

John T Roberts
Wakefield, West Yorks

Brahms's Serenade No 1 live?

Reading your excellent Collection survey by Andrew Farach-Colton (May, page 112), one might be forgiven for assuming that

Brahms's Serenade No 1 in D was a popular staple of the concert repertoire with regular public performances to match the number and variety of recordings referred to. Yet in truth, while many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors do continue to make fine recordings of this work, you will search in vain for concert performances, at least in this country.

Among the finest of these recordings – and the highly credited runner-up in your survey – is that by Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Your magazine has rightly reassessed this performance, having initially given it a very poor review when the disc was first released. Yet here was a reading which brought the same bracing clarity to Brahms that the likes of Sir Roger Norrington and Sir John Eliot Gardiner had brought to their revelatory performances of Beethoven. While the latter garnered accolades aplenty, Sir Charles has had to wait a long time for a better appreciation that he – and he alone, in my view – has brought the same precision and transparency to the music of Brahms, and particularly to this magnificent early masterpiece.

With critics, reviewers and biographers almost unanimous in their positive assessment of this highly engaging work, there remains one burning issue: why is it still never performed in our concert halls? Perhaps your readers can throw some light on this unaccountable neglect.

Tony Millinger
Rugby, Warwickshire

Witty Alfred Deller

In 'Countertenor Cool' (April, page 10), Max Emanuel Cencic points out that 'in the '80s and '90s, if you wanted to be a countertenor, you had to be brave. People would say, "Did you lose your balls?"' Imagine how much braver Albert Deller had to have been in the 1940s, when he began his career. The story goes that a puzzled-looking woman approached him backstage one evening after a recital, and in her imperfect English asked him, 'Mr Deller, you are eunuch?' Deller smiled and replied, 'Am I unique? Absolutely, madam!'

David English
Somerville, MA

Editorial note

Jack Brymer (Icons, June, page 56) was not in fact the soloist in André Previn's HMV recording of Rachmaninov's Second Symphony; the player was Bernard Walton, on loan from the LPO.

OBITUARIES

JÍŘÍ BĚLOHLÁVEK

Conductor

Born February 24, 1946

Died June 1, 2017



The conductor Jiří Bělohlávek has died at the age of 71. His career began in his native Czechoslovakia – as it then was – when he won the Czech National Conducting Competition in 1970, followed by two years as Assistant Conductor to the Czech Philharmonic. He was to become, relatively briefly, its Chief Conductor two decades later, before returning again in 2012, meeting with great success, such that his contract had only recently been extended until 2022.

Though his work also included such prominent podiums as Glyndebourne (where he conducted a highly acclaimed production of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, subsequently filmed and released by Opus Arte), the New York Met, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic (of which he was Principal Guest Conductor), his other great orchestral partnership was with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. This began with a Principal Guest conductorship from 1995 to 2000, before Bělohlávek took on the top job in 2006, beginning with the First Night of the Proms that year. In 2007 he conducted the Last Night of the Proms, a task he was to enjoy on two further occasions. He was appointed CBE in 2012.

Bělohlávek's championship of Czech music, to which he brought both a personal passion and instinctive understanding, resulted in many benchmark catalogue recordings. Of these, three – Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* (released by DG), Martinů's complete symphonies (Onyx) and Suk's *A Summer's Tale* and *Prague* (Chandos) – won *Gramophone* Awards.

In 2014, Decca released a set of the complete Dvořák symphonies and concertos with the Czech PO, praised for 'a wealth of illuminating detail and an empathetic approach to Dvořák's

symphonic oeuvre' by Rob Cowan (9/14), who went on to say that 'the crowning virtue of this set is in the way it relates the composer's artistic growth'. Bělohlávek's most recent release was another Czech masterpiece, Dvořák's *Stabat mater* (also on Decca). This was reviewed in last month's issue, which also included an interview of the conductor by Neil Fisher.

DAVID WULSTAN

Musicologist and conductor

Born January 18, 1937

Died May 6, 2017



David Wulstan, who has died at the age of 80, was a pioneering figure in the early-music movement, with a particular emphasis on English Tudor repertoire.

A pupil of Bernard Rose at Magdalen College, Oxford, in the early 1960s, Wulstan became a lecturer at his old college (1968-78) before moving to Aberystwyth University as Gregynog Professor of Music (1983-90). During his career, his pupils included a trio of leading choral conductors, Peter Phillips, Harry Christophers and Jeffrey Skidmore.

Among his published books is *Listen Again: A New History of Music* (Rowman & Littlefield: 2015), a study that explores the history of tonality and argues that it is rather more evolution than revolution.

He founded The Clerkes of Oxenford in 1961 and the ensemble played a major role in our appreciation and reception of English choral sound in this repertoire. As Tess Knighton wrote in *Gramophone* in May 1990, 'Sonority is the key to the music, and he draws a full, sustained sound from The Clerkes, sometimes soft-grained but never lacking in clarity.' Among their many recordings for Calliope, Classics for Pleasure and Proud Sound, Wulstan and The Clerkes made a speciality of the music of John Sheppard.

NORMA PROCTER

Contralto

Born February 15, 1928

Died May 2, 2017



Norma Procter was best known for her work in oratorio and song.

Born in Cleethorpes, she studied with baritone Roy Henderson and made her debut in Handel's *Messiah* in

1948 at Southwark Cathedral. She sang the title-role in *The Rape of Lucretia* with Britten conducting at the 1958 Aldeburgh Festival. She made her Covent Garden debut in 1961 as Gluck's Orfeo, performing over the next couple of decades with conductors including Bruno Walter, Leonard Bernstein, Jascha Horenstein, Rafael Kubelík, Sir Malcolm Sargent and Pierre Boulez.

Her rich, firm and beautifully controlled contralto voice adorned many recordings including Handel's *Messiah* (Boult/Decca), Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (Krips/Decca), Britten's *Spring Symphony* (Britten/Decca), Nicholas Maw's *Scenes and Arias* (Del Mar/Argo), Malcolm Williamson's *Julius Caesar Jones* (Andrewes/Argo) and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Ansermet/Decca). But it was in the music of Mahler that she particularly excelled; she appears on Haitink's *Das klagende Lied* (Philips and RCO Live) and Kubelík's Mahler Second and Eighth symphonies (DG).

DAVID ANGEL

Violinist

Born July 20, 1954

Died April 10, 2017



The co-founder and second violinist of the Maggini Quartet has died at the age of 62.

A pupil at the Menuhin School, where he worked with Yehudi

Menuhin, Frederick Grinke, Jacqueline Salomons and Nadia Boulanger, Angel went on to the Royal Academy of Music to study with Frederick Grinke and Sidney Griller.

He co-founded the Maggini Quartet in 1988 but also co-led the second violins of the London Mozart Players for 22 years. He played in numerous London-based chamber orchestras including London Musici, London Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of St John's and Sinfonia 21. He became Professor of quartet-playing at Birmingham Conservatoire in 1993, and he was also an Honorary Fellow of Canterbury Christ Church University College and Brunel University.

The Maggini Quartet recorded extensively for Naxos, focusing on the British repertoire including music by Arnold, Bax, Bliss, Britten, Ronald Corp, Ireland, Maxwell Davies, Moeran, Walton and Vaughan Williams (their recording of the latter's String Quartets Nos 1 and 2 and the *Fantasy Quintet* won a *Gramophone* Award in 2001).

NEXT MONTH AUGUST 2017



Taking Elgar abroad

While Elgar has a major place within British musical life, globally it's a different story – but why? Andrew-Farach Colton talks to acclaimed musicians including Daniel Barenboim, Vasily Petrenko, David Zinman and Alisa Weilerstein to find out

Granados at 150

To mark the anniversary of the Spanish composer and pianist, Peter Quantrill explores his eclectic style and influence

Dohnányi's Variations on a Nursery Tune

Jeremy Nicholas revisits a favourite work from his youth and seeks out the best recordings

GRAMOPHONE

ON SALE JULY 19

DON'T MISS IT!

LOVE
MUSIC
HELP
MUSICIANS^{UK}



Supported by the Maria Callas estate.
Photo © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

She left a legacy to music. Will you?

Maria Callas said, "When music fails to soothe the ear, the heart and the senses, then it has missed the point." Her stunning voice and passion may never be equalled but will live forever.

You too could leave a lasting contribution to music with a gift in your will.

Help Musicians UK has been supporting musicians since 1921, from starting out, to coping with illness or retirement.

Show your love for music and contact us today.

helpmusicians.org.uk/legacy
legacy@helpmusicians.org.uk
0207 239 9114

Backing musicians throughout their careers.
Registered charity No. 228089.

NEW RELEASES INDEX

The latest releases on CD, SACD, DVD, Blu-ray and download

Key: ① Full price £10 and over ② Medium price £7.76 - £9.99 ③ Budget price £6.25 - £7.75 ④ Super-budget price up to £6.24 ⑤ Reissue ⑥ Historic ⑦ SACD ⑧ DVD ⑨ Blu-ray ⑩ LP

CD & SACD

ACCENT

Bach, JS Six Motets (r1990s). *Petite Bande/Kuijken, S.* ② ③ ACC24331

Handel Neun deutsche Arien. *Schöder/Batzdorf Hofkapelle.* ② ACC24326

Mozart Fl Qts (r1982). *Kuijken, B, S & W/van Dael.* ② ③ ACC24329

ALIA VOX

Isaac Nel tempo di Lorenzo de' Medici & Maximilian I, 1450-1519. *Hespèrion XXI/Capella Reial de Catalunya/Savall.* ② ③ AVSA9922

ALPHA

Bach, JS Sons for Vn & Fp. *Beyer/Stern.* ② ③ ALPHA329

Bach, JS French Stes. *Rannou.* ② ③ ALPHA328

Barrière Sons for Vc & Basso continuo. *Basses Réunies/Cocset.* ② ③ ALPHA330

Boeset Je meurs sans mourir. *Poème Harmonique/Dumestre.* ② ③ ALPHA331

Couperin, L Suites. Pavane. *Sempé.* ② ③ ALPHA333

Dowland Lute Songs. *Guillon/Bellocq.* ② ③ ALPHA334

Haydn Fl Sons. *Hurel/Couvert.* ② ③ ALPHA335

Lassus Oracula. *Daedalus/Festa.* ② ③ ALPHA337

Marais Folies d'Espagne. *Ens Spirale/Müller, M.* ② ③ ALPHA338

Mozart Concs. *Anima Eterna/Immerseel.* ② ③ ALPHA339

Various Cpsrs Berger Poète - Stes & Sons for Fl & Musette. *Musiciens de Saint-Julien/Lazarevitch.* ② ③ ALPHA332

Various Cpsrs Istanpita: Danses florentines du Trecento. *Agnel.* ② ③ ALPHA336

Various Cpsrs Rayon de lune. *Aromate/Claude.* ② ③ ALPHA340

Various Cpsrs Visions - Arias. *Gens/Munich Rad Orch/Niquet.* ② ALPHA279

Various Cpsrs Yedid Nefesh: Amant de mon âme. *David-Harel.* ② ③ ALPHA341

APARTÉ

Mozart. Weber Cl Qnts. *Genisson/Qt 212.* ② AP149

Schumann Cl Chbr Wks. *Messina/Chiovetta/Lenert.* ② AP153

Various Cpsrs British Promenade - Wks for Ten, Vc & Hp. *Bennett/Gaillard/Chatron.* ② AP140

ARCANA

Handel. Telemann Water Music. *Zefiro/Bernardini.* ② A432

Various Cpsrs Fiery Genius. *Neapolitan Wks for Vns.* ② A429

ARTA

Dvořák Sym No 2. *Musica Florea/Štryncl.* ② F10220

AUDITE

Bloch Schelomo Dvořák Vc Conc. *Silent Woods Coppey/Deutsches SO Berlin/Karabits.* ② AUDITE97 734

Various Cpsrs American Recital, Vol 2. *Murtfeld.* ② AUDITE97 740

BERLIN CLASSICS

Bach, CPE, JC & JS Bach & Sons, Vol 2. *Knauer/Zurich CO.* ② ③ 0300764BC

Bach, JS. Villa-Lobos Bachiana. *Fateyeva.* ② ③ 0300909BC

Chopin Nocturnes. *Huangci.* ② ③ 0300905BC

Mahler Sym No 5. Wunderhorn Songs (r1982/84). *Lorenz/Staatskapelle Berlin/Sultner/Berlin SO/Herbig.* ② ③ 0300922BC

Wagner Ovs (r1964). *Staatskapelle Dresden/Wakasugi.* ② ③ 0300923BC

Various Cpsrs Gala Unter den Linden (r1986/87). *Berlin St Op.* ② ③ 0300925BC

Various Cpsrs Parfum - Orch Songs. *Karg/Bamberg SO/Afkham.* ② ③ 0300832BC

BERLINER PHILHARMONIKER

Beethoven Cpte Syms (pp2015). *BPO/Rattle.* ② ③ BPHR160092

BRIEFMARKEN

Francobolli Estamples. *Los Sellos.* ② SG399

BRILLIANT CLASSICS

Beethoven Cpte Pf Sons, Vol 1. *Bellucci.* ② ③ 95103

Boccherini Stg Trios, Op 6. *Lubotsky Trio.* ② 95493

Gattali Gtr Concertinos. *Salcito/Abruzzo SO/Bufalini.* ② 95491

Hindemith Cpte Cl Chbr Wks. *Bandieri/Ceccanti, D & V/Savinio.* ② ③ 95295

Kabalevsky Pf Son No 3. *Preludes. Bonfilio.* ② 95256

Mansurian Songs & Inst Wks. *Sarkissian/Martynov/Milkis/Ulantseva/Musica Viva CO/Rudin.* ② 95489

Sardelli Hpd Stes. *Stella.* ② 95488

Various Cpsrs Erotica antiqua - Neapolitan Villanellas. *Calandra/Ens Arte Musica/Cera.* ② 95448

Various Cpsrs Fl Concs. *Various artists.* ② ③ 95450

Various Cpsrs Ionisation - Perc Wks. *Tetraktis Ens.* ② 95134

CHANNEL CLASSICS

Various Cpsrs Carrousel. *Holland Baroque/Vloeimans.* ② CCS39817

CHRISTOPHORUS

Clamer Mensa harmonica - Tafelmusik. *Dolce Risonanza.* ② CHR77406

Krása Brundibar (r1986). *Ch & Orch of St Ursula Secondary School, Freiburg/Grüters.* ② ③ CHE02112

Weber Syms Nos 1 & 2. *Konzertstück. Krumpöck/Vienna Concert-Verein/Flor.* ② ③ CHE02122

Various Cpsrs Alta danza: 15th-Century Dance Music in Italy (r1997). *Haulz et les Bas.* ② ③ CHE02132

CSO RESOUND

Bruckner Sym No 9. *Chicago SO/Muti.* ② CSOR9011716

CYBELE

Zimmermann, BA Late Sym Wks. *SWR RSO, Stuttgart/ Tupa.* ② ③ CYBELE3SACDKIG008

CYPRES

Various Cpsrs Bricantes. *Anavantoul.* ② CYP0609

DELPHIAN

Carbonelli Sanate da camera. *Čičić/Illyria Consort.* ② DCD34194

DEUX-ELLES

Various Cpsrs Late Night Lute. *Wadsworth.* ② DXL1175

DIVINE ART

Mattheson Hpd Stes. *Rowland.* ② ③ ATH23301

Szymanowski Pf Wks. *Karaśkiewicz.* ② DDA25151

Various Cpsrs Pf at the Ballet. *Goldstone.* ② DDA25148

LA DOLCE VOLTA

Couperin, F Cpte Org Wks (r1973). *Isolr.* ② ③ LDV1478

De Grigny Cpte Org Wks (r1972). *Isolr.* ② ③ LDV1490

Franck Cpte Org Wks (r1975). *Isolr.* ② ③ LDV1768

EDICIONES SINGULARES

Saint-Saëns Proserpine. *Sols Incl Gens/Munich Rad Orch/Schirmer.* ② ③ ES1027

ERATO

Bellini Sonnambula. *Sols Incl Dessay/Lyon Op/Pidò.* ② ③ 9029 58690-8

Meyerbeer Grand Op. *Damrau/Lyon Op Orch/Villaume.* ② ③ 9029 58490-1; ② ③ 9029 58489-9 (deluxe edn)

Mozart. Vivaldi Op Arias. *Garanča.* ② 9029 59059-9

Mozart Nozze di Figaro. *Sols Incl Tomlinson & Rodgers/BPO/Barenboim.* ② ③ 9029 58690-9

Mozart Zauberflöte. *Sols Incl Dessay/Arts Florissants/Christie.* ② ③ 9029 58691-0

Prokofiev War & Peace. *Sols Incl Vishnevskaya & Gedda/Rad France Nat Orch/Rostropovich.* ② ④ ③ 9029 58547-6

Saint-Saëns Samson et Dalila. *Sols Incl Vickers & Gorri/Paris Op/Prêtre.* ② ③ 9029 58690-4

Various Cpsrs Eternal Stories. *Ebène Qt/Portal.* ② 9029 58395-6

EVIDENCE

Mellits Stg Qts Nos 3-5. *Debussy Qt.* ② EVCD033

FUGA LIBERA

Dvořák. Janáček Slavic Soul - Pf Wks. *Michiels.* ② FUG743

Various Cpsrs Kaleidoscope - Solo Vn Wks. *Grether.* ② FUG742

GEA NEW

Pironkoff Skin Double - Wks for Accordion, Sheng & Ens. *Stereov/Wu/Musica Nova Sofia/Trio AmosYossifov.* ② GD394

Various Cpsrs Personae - Solo Vn Wks. *Smucker.* ② GR32

GLOSSA

Boccherini Stg Trios, Op 34 (r2010-11). *Ritirata.* ② ③ GCD923105

Crusell Cl Qts. *Hoeprich/London Haydn Qt.* ② GCD920609

Various Cpsrs Occhi turchini: Songs from Calabria. *Vittorio/Laboratorio '600/Pavan.* ② GCDP33002

GOD RECORDS

Wolff, C Berlin Exercises. *Wolff/Ens Zwischentöne/Ablinger.* ② ③ GOD41

HARMONIA MUNDI *harmoniamundi.com*
Bartók Cpte Stg Qts. *Heath Qt.* (M) ② **HMM90 7661/2**
Various Cpsrs Many are the Wonders. *ORA/Digby.* (F) **HMM90 5248**

Various Cpsrs Stravaganza d'amore: The Birth of Opera at the Medici Court. *Pygmalion/Pichon.* (M) ② **HMM90 2286/7**

Various Cpsrs Tribute to Janet Craxton. *Daniel, N/Britten Ob Qt.* (F) **HMM90 7672**

HEVHETIA *czecheverything.co.uk*
Palamidessi Amber Haze. *Palamidessi.* (F) **HVO137-2-331**

HYPERION *hyperion-records.co.uk*
Machaut Sovereign Beauty. *Orlando Consort.* (F) **CDA68134**
Stanford Chor Wks. *Ch of Trinity Coll, Cambridge/Layton.* (F) **CDA68174**

Swann Songs. *Glynn.* (B) ② **CDA68172**

Walton Vn Conc. Partita. Hindemith Vars. *Marwood/BBC Scottish SO/Brabbins.* (F) **CDA67986**

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE *kings.cam.ac.uk*
Various Cpsrs King of Insts: A Voice Reborn - Org Wks. *Cleobury.* (F) (CD) **KGS0020**

LINN *linnrecords.com*
Bach, JS Solo Wks for Marimba. *Kuniko.* (F) **CKD585**
Beaser Gtr Conc. *Fisk/RSNO/Serebrier.* (F) **CKD528**

Strauss, R Metamorphosen. Sonatina No 2. *Aldeburgh Stgs & Winds/Daniel, N/Däunert.* (F) **CKD538**

MIRARE *mirare.fr*
Scarlatti, D Kybd Sons, Vol 5. *Hantaï.* (F) **MIR326**

MSR CLASSICS *msrcd.com*
Bolcom. Corigliano. *Ives Vn Sons. Lin/Lopes.* (F) **MS1553**
Harbach Syms Nos 7-10. *LPO/Angus.* (F) **MS1614**

Manchicourt Missa Reges terrae. *Ch of St Luke in the Fields/Shuler.* (F) **MS1632**

Various Cpsrs Lightning Fields - Wks for Tpt & Pf. *Bergman/Harios.* (F) **MS1630**

MÜNCHNER PHILHARMONIKER *mphil.de/en/label-mphil.html*
Dvořák Sym No 9 **Schubert** Sym No 8 (r1985/88). *Munich PO/Celibidache.* (F) (CD) **9305 21123-7**

ONYX *onyxclassics.com*
Dutilleux. Saint-Saëns Siècle - Wks for Vc & Orch. *Elschenbroich/BBC Scottish SO/Wilson/Blunier.* (F) **ONYX4173**

Various Cpsrs In Schubert's Company. *Rysanov/Katsnelson/Riga Sinfonietta.* (M) ② **ONYX4183**

PAN CLASSICS
Various Cpsrs Cosmography of Polyphony - Renaissance Wks for 12 Recs. *Royal Wind Music.* (F) **PC10377**

PAVLÍK *pavlikrecords.sk*
Grieg Vn Sons. *Pala/Fanzowitz.* (F) **PA0153-2-132**
Various Cpsrs Tangos. *Diz/Camerata Tango.* (F) **PA0155-2-131**

Various Cpsrs Vienna 1728 - Vc Concs. *Stahel/Solamente Naturali.* (F) **PA0139-2-131**

Various Cpsrs Wks for Ob & Org. *Dufka/Mesjar.* (F) ② **PA0152-2-132**

Various Cpsrs Wks for Sax & Pf. *Hoda/Fanzowitz.* (F) **PA0156-2-131**

PENTATONE *pentatonemusic.com*
Beethoven Missa solemnis (pp2016). *Sols/Berlin RSO/Janowski.* (F) (CD) **PTC5186 565**

Getty Canterville Ghost. *Sols/Leipzig Op/Foremny.* (F) (CD) **PTC5186 541**

Puccini Fanciulla del West (r1977). *Sols incl Domingo/Royal Op/Mehta.* (F) ② (CD) **PTC5186 243**

Various Cpsrs Carnevale 1729 - Arias. *Hallenberg/Pomo d'Oro/Montanari.* (F) ② (CD) **PTC5186 678**

Various Cpsrs Meeting of the Spirits. *Haimovitz/Uccello.* (F) (CD) **PTC5186 659**

PHI *outhere-music.com/phi*
Various Cpsrs Orch Wks. Interviews. *Collegium Vocale Gent/Royal Flemish PO/Champs-Élysées Orch/Herreweghe.* (M) ⑤ **LPH026**

PIANO CLASSICS *piano-classics.com*

Chopin. Franck Vc Sons. *Kloeckner/Fedorova.* (M) **PCL59472**

Godowsky Chopin Studies. *Delucchi.* (M) **PCL0122**

PRAGA DIGITALS *pragadigitals.com*
Beethoven Chbr Wks (pp1961-65). *Trampler/Horszowski/Budapest Qt.* (F) **PRD250 381**

Bruckner Sym No 5. Te Deum (pp1964/65). *RCO/BPO/Jochum.* (F) (CD) **DSD350 114**

Janáček Glagolitic Mass. Hospodine. Diary of One who Disappeared (r1964-78). *Sols incl Beňáčeková/Czech PO/Neumann.* (F) **PRD250 382**

Liszt Sym Poems, Vol 1 (r1956-74). *Various artists.* (F) (CD) **DSD350 124**

Various Cpsrs Orch Wks (r1961-79). *Košler.* (B) ② **PRD250 377**

Various Cpsrs Russian Vn Wks (r/pp1958-81). *Kogan.* (M) ② **PRD250 373**

PRIORY *prioryorg.uk*
Purcell English Orpheus. *Chapel Ch of Trinity Hall, Cambridge/Orpheus Britannicus/Arthur.* (F) **PRCD1182**

RCO LIVE *concertgebouwworkest.nl*
Glanert Requiem for Hieronymus Bosch. *RCO/Stenz.* (F) (CD) **RCO17005**

REGENT *regent-records.co.uk*
Lobo Missa Vox clamantis. *Truro Cath Ch/Gray.* (F) **REGCD491**

RESONUS *resonusclassics.com*
Bingham Org Wks. *Farr.* (B) ② **RES10191**
Dall'Albero Polyphonia in excelsis. *Ch of Sidney Sussex Coll, Cambridge/Skinner.* (F) **RES10190**

RICERCAR *outhere-music.com/ricercar*
Tinctoris Secret Consolations. *Miroir de Musique/Romain.* (F) **RIC380**

RUBICON
Various Cpsrs Alehouse Sessions. *Elke/Barokksolistene.* (F) **RCD1017**; (F) (CD) **RLP1017**

SIGNUM *signumrecords.com*
Chopin Preludes. Barcarolle. Berceuse. *Despax.* (F) **SIGCD482**
Dove In Damascus. Out of Time. Pf Qnt. *Padmore/Owen/Sacconi Qt.* (F) **SIGCD487**

Gough World Encompassed: Sir Francis Drake's Circumnavigation of the Globe, 1577-80. *Fretwork/Callow.* (M) ② **SIGCD453**

Waley-Cohen, F Permutations. *Waley-Cohen, T.* (B) **SIGCD496**

Various Cpsrs Subito - Wks for Vn & Pf. *Hwang/Matthews.* (F) **SIGCD486**

SOMM *somm-recordings.com*
Various Cpsrs Kathleen Ferrier Remembered. *Ferrier/Walter/Moore/Stone.* (F) (CD) **SOMMCD0264**

SUPRAPHON *supraphon.com*
Bach, JS Hpd Concs (r1968). *Růžičková/Prague Chbr Sols/Neumann.* (F) **SU4222-2**
Dvořák. Suk Pf Qts. *Josef Suk Pf Qt.* (F) **SU4227-2**

Ostrčil Jack's Kingdom (bp1954). *Sols/Prague SO/Jiráček.* (B) ② **SU4224-2**

Various Cpsrs Prague - Vienna: Journey in Songs. *Janková/Willi.* (F) **SU4231-2**

WARNER CLASSICS *warnerclassics.com*
Bach, JS Stories - Wks for Vc & Pf. *Zdunik/Dębicz.* (B) ② **9029 58401-5**

Donizetti Lucia di Lammermoor. *Sols incl Gruberová/RPO/Rescigno.* (B) ② **9029 58690-7**

Elgar Vc Conc. Sea Pictures. *Du Pré/Baker/Barbirolli.* (F) (CD) **9029 58718-8**

Massenet Thaïs. *Sols incl Sills/New PO/Maazel.* (B) ② **9029 58690-6**

Messé Amélie: A New Musical. *Original Broadway Cast.* (F) **9029 58311-0**

Mozart Entführung aus dem Serail. *Sols incl Kenny/Zurich Op/Harnoncourt.* (B) ② **9029 58691-3**

Piazzolla Sound of. *Various artists.* (B) ② **9029 58318-9**

Richter Out of the Dark Room. *Richter.* (F) ② **9903 99882-2**

Rossini Barbiere di Siviglia. *Sols incl Milnes/LSO/Levine.* (B) ② **9029 58690-5**

Schubert 'Trout' Qnt. *Richter/Borodin Qt/Hörtnagel.* (F) (CD) **9029 58718-6**

Verdi Aida. *Sols incl Gallardo-Domás & Borodina/VPO/Harnoncourt.* (B) ③ **9029 58691-2**

Vivaldi Four Seasons. *Mutter/VPO/Karajan.* (F) (CD) **9029 58719-4**

Various Cpsrs Brass. *Sinf Varsovia.* (F) **9029 58401-4**

Various Cpsrs Cpte Orch Recs. *Cluytens.* (S) (64 discs) **9029 58866-9**

Various Cpsrs Icon: The Early Years (r1935-49). *Böhm.* (S) (CD) **9029 58867-2**

Various Cpsrs Three Tenors Concert 1994. *Carreras/Domingo/Pavarotti/Mehta.* (F) ② **9029 58718-7**

WIGMORE HALL LIVE *wigmore-hall.org.uk/live*
Schubert Songs, Vol 3 (pp2014). *Bostridge/Drake.* (M) **WHLIVE0088**

Various Cpsrs Purcell: A Retrospective. *Joshua/Connolly/English Concert/Bicket.* (M) **WHLIVE0087**

DVD & BLU-RAY

ACCENTUS
Mahler Sym No 8 (pp2016). *Lucerne Fest Orch/Chailly.* (F) **DVD ACC20390**; (F) **ACC10390**

CMajor Entertainment
Bruckner Sym No 3 (pp2016). *Staatskapelle Dresden/Thielemann.* (F) **DVD 740808**; (F) **740904**

DYNAMIC *dynamic.it*
Donizetti Rosmonda d'Inghilterra (pp2016). *Sols incl Pratt, Mei & Schmunck/Donizetti Op Orch/Rolli.* (F) **DVD 37757**; (F) **57757**

ERATO *warnerclassics.com*
Handel Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno. *Sols incl Devieille, Mingardo & Spyres/Concert d'Astrée/Haïm.* (F) **DVD 9029 58193-6**; (F) **9029 58192-9**

EUROARTS
Gershwin Songs. *Sols incl Reeves/BPO/Ozawa/Rattle.* (M) ③ **DVD 8024 25376-8**

Monteverdi 3x Poppea. *Norwegian Nat Op/Schwetzingen Fest/Stuttgart Th.* (M) ③ **DVD 8024 25631-8**

Various Cpsrs Europakonzert 2005 from Budapest. *Kavakos/BPO/Rattle.* (F) **DVD 8024 25418-8**

Various Cpsrs Waldbühne 2007: Rhapsodies. *Hough/Fuchs/BPO/Rattle.* (F) **DVD 8024 25623-8**

MARIINSKY *mariinskylabel.com*
Rimsky-Korsakov Golden Cockerel (pp2014). *Sols/Mariinsky Orch/Gergiev.* (F) ② (DVD + CD) **MAR0596**

NAXOS *naxos.com*
Puccini Bohème (pp2014). *Sols/Malmö Op Orch/Badea.* (F) **DVD 2 110385**; (F) **NBD0059**

OPUS ARTE
Puccini Ops. *Various artists.* (S) ⑥ **DVD OA1240BD**
Rossini Barbiere di Siviglia. *Sols incl de Niese & Corbelli/Glyndebourne Op/LPO/Mazzola.* (F) **DVD OA1238D**; (F) **OABD7218D**

REVIEWS INDEX

A			The West Wind (Vestenvinden), Op 73a	69	Crosse		Notturmo	51	Graun, CH				
	Adams		Traces of the Gods (Gudarnas spår), Op 88	69	Concertino, Op 15	33	Senza risposte	51		Armida – A tanti pianti miei; La Gloria	84		
	Gnarly Buttons	44	Väinämöinen, Op 147	69	Concerto for Chamber Orchestra, Op 8	33	Trio	51		Britannico – Mi paventi il figlio indegno	84		
Albéniz		Berlioz				Elegy, Op 1	33	F		Coriolano – Senza di te, mio Bene	84		
	Tango, Op 165 No 2 (arr Godowsky)	65	Bénédiction et serment: Deux motifs de Benvenuto Cellini, S396 (transc Liszt)	58	Violin Concerto No 2, Op 26	33	Farrington			Il Mithridate – Piangete	84		
Arensky		Danse des sylphes de La Damnation de Faust, S475 (transc Liszt)	58	Czerny		Violin Concerto No 2, Op 26	33	Heatwave	55	L'Orfeo – Il mir s'inalza e freme; D'ogni aura al mormorar; Sento una pena	84		
	Piano Trios – Nos 1 & 2	48	L'idée fixe, S395 (transc Liszt)	58	Variations on a Famous Viennese Waltz, Op 12	65	Fauré		Aubade, Op 6 No 1	70	Rodelinda, regina de' Langobardi – Sinfonia	84	
Arnold	Suites – selection	94	Marche au supplice de la Sinfonie fantastique, S470a (transc Liszt)	58	D		Hymne, Op 7 No 2	70	Feldman		Silla – No, no, di Libia fra l'arena; Parmi...ah no!	84	
	Suite bourgeoise	55	Marche des pèlerins de la symphonie Harold en Italie, S473ii (transc Liszt)	58		Baba Yaga	94	L'aurore		70	Instruments I	44	
B			Ouverture des Francs-juges, S471 (transc Liszt)	59	David		La chanson d'Ève, Op 95	70	Février				
	Bach, JS		Ouverture du Roi Lear, S474 (transc Liszt)	59	Lalla-Roukh – Sous le feuillage sombre	90	Le pays des rêves, Op 39 No 3	70		Gismonda – Dit-elle vrai?	90		
	Cantata No 41 – Jesu, nun sei gepreiset	54	Bizet		Debussy		Le plus doux chemin, Op 87 No 1	70		Frances-Hoad			
	Cantatas – No 152, Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn	68	L'arlésienne, Op 23 – Minuet (arr Rachmaninov)	65	Cello Sonata	54	Le ramier, Op 87 No 2	70	The Madness Industry	44			
	No 199, Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut	68	Clovis et Clotilde – Prière, ô doux souffle de l'ange!	90	Images	58	Le secret, Op 23 No 3	70	Franck				
	No 202, Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten ('Wedding Cantata')	68	Bloch		L'isle joyeuse	58	Notre amour, Op 23 No 2	70	Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90			
	Solo Cello Suite No 3, BWV1009	54	Cello Sonata	48	Delius		Puisqu'ici-bas toute âme, Op 10 No 1	70	Prélude, choral et fugue	64			
Bach, JS/Busoni			From Jewish Life	48	An den Sonnenschein	68	Feldman		Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90			
	Chaconne	64	Méditation hébraïque	48	Ave Maria	68	Instruments I	44	Frescobaldi				
Balákirev			Nigun (arr Joseph Schuster)	48	Durch den Wald	68	Février		Toccata terza	28			
	Islamey, Op 18	64	Suite	48	Frühlingsanbruch	68	Gismonda – Dit-elle vrai?	90	Fuchs				
	Symphonies – complete	94	Borodin		Intermezzo (arr Fenby)	55	Frances-Hoad		Cello Sonatas – Op 29; Op 83	51			
Balogh			Symphonies – complete	94	Midsummer Song	68	The Madness Industry	44	Seven Fantasy Pieces, Op 78	51			
	Dirge of the North (arr Kreisler)	52	Bowden		On Craig Ddu	68	Franck		Fulmer				
Bax			Airs No Oceans Keep	44	Sonnenscheinlied	68	Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90	Within his bending sickle's compass come	44			
	Five Greek Folk Songs	68	Brahms		String Quartet (with alternative versions of first two movts)	49	Prélude, choral et fugue	64	Furtwängler				
	I sing of a maiden that is makeless	68	Double Concerto	95	The splendour falls on castle walls	68	Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90	Piano Quintet	52			
	Mater ora filium	68	F-A-E' Scherzo, WoO2	30	To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water	68	Frescobaldi		Alma redemptoris mater – K185; K187	71			
	Of a rose I sing a song	68	Piano Concerto No 2	95	Yes, here we shall feast (Her ute skal gildet staa)	68	Fuchs		Ave regina caelorum – K205; K206; K207; K208	71			
	This Worldes Joie	68	String Quintets – No 1, Op 88; No 2, Op 111	48	Desyatnikov		Février		Pia mater fons amoris, K176	71			
Beethoven			Symphony No 2	95	Russian Seasons	33	Gismonda – Dit-elle vrai?	90	Sonatas – K346; K367; K369; K377; K379; K397	71			
	Fugue, WoO31	58	Violin Concerto	95	Sketches to Sunset	33	Frances-Hoad		Fulmer				
	Symphonies – Nos 1 & 2	95	Violin Concerto	30	Donati		The Madness Industry	44	Within his bending sickle's compass come	44			
	Two Preludes, Op 39	58	Violin Sonata No 1, Op 78	30	Dulcis amor Iesu!	28	Franck		Furtwängler				
	Violin Concerto	95	Britten		Dring		Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90	Piano Quintet	52			
	Violin Sonata No 9, 'Kreutzer'	95	Cello Sonata, Op 65	54	Trio	55	Prélude, choral et fugue	64	Alma redemptoris mater – K185; K187	71			
Benjamin, G			Bruch		Dvofák		Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90	Ave regina caelorum – K205; K206; K207; K208	71			
	Dream of the Song	84	Violin Concerto No 1	95	Humoreske, Op 101 No 7 (arr Kreisler)	52	Frescobaldi		Pia mater fons amoris, K176	71			
	Flight	84	Bruckner		Indian Lament (arr Kreisler)	52	Février		Sonatas – K346; K367; K369; K377; K379; K397	71			
	Into the Little Hill	84	Symphony No 3 (1889 version, ed Nowak)	30	Mass, Op 86 B175	69	Gismonda – Dit-elle vrai?	90	Fulmer				
Bergman			Symphony No 6 (ed Cohrs)	31	Slavonic Dance No 2 (arr Kreisler)	52	Frances-Hoad		Within his bending sickle's compass come	44			
	And the lad went out in the morning (Och gossen gick sig ut i morgonstund)	68	Bruneau		Te Deum, Op 103 B176	69	The Madness Industry	44	Furtwängler				
	Four Songs for Mixed Chorus, Op 38a – The child piles up (Barnet travar); Film Manuscript (Filmmanuskript); A Spring Song (En vårvisa)	68	Geneviève – Seigneur! Est-ce bien moi que vous avez choisie?	90	E		Franck		Piano Quintet	52			
C			C		Elgar		Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90	Alma redemptoris mater – K185; K187	71			
	Four Songs for Mixed Chorus, Op 44b	68	Cage		Coronation March, Op 65	34	Prélude, choral et fugue	64	Ave regina caelorum – K205; K206; K207; K208	71			
	Hommage à Béla Bartók, Op 132	68	Music for Wind Instruments	44	Coronation Ode, Op 44 – Crown the King	34	Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90	Pia mater fons amoris, K176	71			
	I have now lost the friend I loved (Den vänjag älskat haver jag nu mist)	68	Carter		Elegy, Op 58	34	Février		Sonatas – K346; K367; K369; K377; K379; K397	71			
	Lamento – Burlatta	68	Clarinet Concerto	44	La capricieuse, Op 17	34	Gismonda – Dit-elle vrai?	90	Fulmer				
	My tree is the pine (Mitt träd är pinjen), Op 12 No 5	68	Sonata in D minor	28	Salut d'amour, Op 12	34	The Madness Industry	44	Within his bending sickle's compass come	44			
	Nein zur Lebensangst, Op 120	68	Chaminade		Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands, Op 27	34	Franck		Furtwängler				
	Our Country (Vårt land), Op 146	69	Capriccio, Op 18	49	Sea Pictures, Op 37 – Where corals lie	34	Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90	Piano Quintet	52			
	Petrarca-Suite, Op 118	69	Piano Trios – No 1, Op 11; No 2, Op 34	49	Serenade	34	Prélude, choral et fugue	64	Alma redemptoris mater – K185; K187	71			
	Psalm, Op 50a	69	Romanza appassionata	49	Sonatina	34	Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90	Ave regina caelorum – K205; K206; K207; K208	71			
	A Song of the Islands (Skärgårdsgossens visa)	69	Sommeil d'enfant	49	String Quartet	49	The Madness Industry	44	Pia mater fons amoris, K176	71			
	Springtime, Op 60	69	Trois Morceaux, Op 31	49	The Dream of Gerontius, Op 38 – Kyrie	34	Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90	Sonatas – K346; K367; K369; K377; K379; K397	71			
	Summer is here (Nu är sommarn här)	69	Chopin		The Fringes of the Fleet	34	Prélude, choral et fugue	64	Fulmer				
	Summer Night (Sommarnatt)	69	Polonaise-fantaisie, Op 61	64	The Pipes of Pan	34	Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90	Within his bending sickle's compass come	44			
	The Lassies (Tyttöset), Op 73b	68	Waltzes – No 1, Op 18; No 2, Op 34 No 1; No 3, Op 34 No 2	65	Violin Concerto, Op 61	34	The Madness Industry	44	Furtwängler				
			Waltzes – No 5, Op 42; No 8, Op 64 No 3	63	Elias		Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90	Piano Quintet	52			
					Electra Mourns	70	Prélude, choral et fugue	64	Alma redemptoris mater – K185; K187	71			
					Geranos	70	Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90	Ave regina caelorum – K205; K206; K207; K208	71			
					Meet me in the Green Glen	70	The Madness Industry	44	Pia mater fons amoris, K176	71			
					Once did I breathe another's breath	70	Les Béatitudes – Moi, du Sauveur je suis la Mère	90	Sonatas – K346; K367; K369; K377; K379; K397	71			
					Eliasson		Prélude, choral et fugue	64	Fulmer				
					Fogliame	51	Rédemption – Le flot se lève	90	Within his bending sickle's compass come	44			

Syncopation	52	Fifteen Preludes, Op 132	60	Rameau	Three Motets, Op 38	76	Drei Klavierstücke, Op 32	63
Tambourin chinois, Op 3	52	Four Australian Birds, Op 84a	60	Nouvelles suites de Pièces de clavecin	Strauss II, J		Kleinstadtbilder, Op 49	63
Toy Soldier's March	52	Not Farewell	60	– Gavotte et six doubles; Les	Abschied von St Petersburg, Op 210		Piano Sonata, Op 47	63
Krenek		Romanza, Op 119a	51	sauvages		45	Zehn Anfangs-Etuden, Op 59	63
Concerto for Two Pianos, Op 127	35	Sonata, Op 8	60	Sarabande (arr Godowsky)		45	Zehn Mittelstufen-Etuden, Op 57	63
Double Concerto for Violin and Piano, Op 124	35	Song Thrush Fragment	60	Tambourin (arr Godowsky)		45	Torri	
Little Concerto for Piano and Organ, Op 88	35	The National Anthem	60	Ravel			Amadis di Grecia – La cara tua favella	89
Piano Concerto No 4, Op 123	35	Three Chants, Op 138	60	Gaspard de la nuit		58	Lucio Vero – Pace e guerra	89
L		Mayr		Gaspard de la nuit	Ⓢ 61		Venceslao – Parto, non ho costanza	89
La Tombelle, F		Telemaco	85	Jeux d'eau	58		U	
Mélodies	71	Medtner		L'heure espagnole	86		Uspér	
Leclair		Piano Concertos – Nos 1 & 2	94	La valse	58, 65		Sonata a 8	28
Violin Concertos, Op 7 – No 1; No 3; No 4; No 5	36	Mendelssohn		Reich			V	
Lindberg, C		Concert Piece No 1, Op 113	44	WTC 9/11	44		Varèse	
The Erratic Dreams of Mr Grönsted	Ⓢ 36	Overtures – various	95	René			Intégrales	44
Lindroth		Messiaen		Légende d'après 'Les elfes' de Leconte de Lisle	Ⓢ 65		Vecsey	
Des Menschen Wort vergeht	53	La Nativité du Seigneur	60	Rimsky-Korsakov			La valse triste (arr Cziffra)	65
Night Music	53	Les corps glorieux	61	Sinfonietta on Russian Themes	94		Verdi	
Para dos violines	53	Messe de la Pentecôte	61	Symphonies – Nos 1-3	94		Otello	Ⓢ 88
Rite Now	53	Offrande au Saint-Sacrement	60	Robbins			Un ballo in maschera	Ⓢ 87
SXQ II	53	Quatuor pour la fin du temps	Ⓢ 54	Bagatelle	55		Viadana	
Liszt		Monteverdi		Pastorale	55		Deus in adiutorium	28
Confutatis et Lacrymosa (Mozart), S550	59	Beatus vir I	28	Röntgen			Vinci	
Erlkönig (Schubert), S558 No 4	59	Confitebor tibi, Domine II	28	Serenade	38		Il Medo – Pria che sposarlo...Taci o di morte...Sento scherzar	89
Hungarian Rhapsody, S244 No 18	59	Dixit Dominus II	28	Symphonies – No 9, 'The Bitonal'; No 21	38		W	
Hungarian Rhapsody, S244 No 2	63	Laudate Dominum I	28	Rota			Wagner	
Isoldens Liebestod (Wagner), S447	59	Laudate pueri I	28	Sarabanda e toccata	Ⓢ 65		Lohengrin – Attest du nicht	89
Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, S163 No 4	59	Salve, o regina	28	S			Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg – Morgenlich leuchtend	89
Liebestraum, S541 No 3	59	Ut queant laxis	28	Saint-Saëns			Parsifal	88
Paraphrase de concert sur Rigoletto (Verdi), S434	59	Vespro della Beata Vergine	74	Africa, Op 89	38		Parsifal – Webe! Webe! Was tat ich	89
Phantasiestück über Motive aus Rienzi (Wagner), S439	59	Mozart		Caprice-Valse, 'Wedding Cake', Op 76	38		Tannhäuser – Hör an, Wolfram	89
Le rossignol, S250/1 SADC	65	Adagio and Allegro, K594	58	Étienne Marcel – Ah! Laissez-moi, ma mère!	90		Tannhäuser – Overture	30
Two Csárdás, S225	59	Andante, K616	58	Piano Concerto No 3	38	Stravinsky	Walton	
Valse-caprice, S427 No 6	59	Fantasia, K608	58	Rhapsodie d'Auvergne, Op 73	38	The Firebird (transcr Guido Agosti) – Danse infernale; Berceuse; Finale	Partita	43
Venezia e Napoli, S162	59	Mass No 16, 'Coronation', K317	74	Sarro			Spitfire Prelude and Fugue	43
Lully		Mitridate, re di Ponto	Ⓢ 86	L'Arsace – Quell'usignuolo	89		Variations on a Theme by Hindemith	43
Armide	84	Piano Concertos – No 21; No 23	36	Scarlatti, D/Tausig			Violin Concerto	43
Lyapunov		Piano Sonata No 9, K331 – Andante grazioso	63	Pastorale, K9	63	T	Weeks	
Symphony No 3	94	String Quintets – complete	95	Schmidt			Mala punica	77
M		Vesperae solennes de confessore, K339	74	Symphony No 2	38		Walled Garden	77
Maayani		Mussorgsky		Schubert			Whitley	
Maqamat	Ⓢ 65	Pictures at an Exhibition	Ⓢ 61	Arpeggione Sonata, D821	54	Taneyev	Duo	44
Machaut		Pictures at an Exhibition (orch Ravel)	37	Die schöne Müllerin, D795	75	Symphony, 'Asrael', Op 27	Z	
Comment qu'a moy l'onteinne	73	N		Fantasia, D940	63	Tansman	Zelenka	
Dame, a qui	73	Niedermeyer		Grande marche, D819	63	Bric à brac	Six Sonatas, ZWV181	54
Dame, ne regardés pas	73	Stradella – Ah!...Quel songe affreux!	90	Marche caractéristique, D886 No 1	63	Sextuor	Collections	
De Bon Espoir/Puis que la douce/ Speravi	73	P		Nachtstück, D672	Ⓢ 65	Tchaikovsky	Bamberg Symphony Orchestra – 'Parfum'	78
De desconfort	73	Palestrina/Bovicelli		Polonaise, D824	63	Andante cantabile, Op 11 (arr Kreisler)	Juliette Bausor – 'Heatwave'	55
Foy porter	73	Ave verum corpus	28	Rondo, D951	63	Capriccio italiano	Sophie Bevan – 'Perfido!'	79
J'ay tant/Lasse! Je sui/Ego moriar pro te	73	Pärt		Variations on an Original Theme, D813	63	Concert Fantasia, Op 56	Johan Botha	89
Quant j'ay l'espart	73	Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten	75	Vier Ländler, D814	63	Morceaux, Op 72 – No 5, Méditation; No 17, Passé lointain	Choir of Clare College, Cambridge – 'Pange lingua'	78
Se quanque Amours	73	Petters		Schubert/Liszt		Nocturne, Op 19 No 4	Ensemble Intercontemporain – 'New York'	44
Tres bonne et belle	73	Cecilia, vergine romana	75	Auf dem Wasser zu singen, D774 S558	Ⓢ 61	October, Op 37a No 10	Euskal Baroque Ensemble – 'El Amor brujo'	78
Un lay de consolation, 'Pour ce que plus proprement'	73	Collage über B-A-C-H	75	Der Müller und der Bach, D795	Ⓢ 61	Orchestra Suites – Nos 2-4	Ensemble Intercontemporain – 'Mind Music'	44
Mahler		Litany	75	No 19 S565	Ⓢ 61	Orchestral Suite No 3 – Theme and Variations	Elisabeth Plank – 'L'arpa notturna'	Ⓢ 65
Kindertotenlieder	Ⓢ 74	Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen	75	Schumann		Piano Concertos – Nos 1-3	Sergey Rachmaninov	63
Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen	Ⓢ 74	Pollarolo		Fünf Stücke im Volkston, Op 102	54	Scherzo à la russe, Op 1 No 1	Alberto Reyes	64
Rückert-Lieder	Ⓢ 74	Ariodante – Già mi par	89	Piano Sonata No 2, Op 22	64		Mstislav Rostropovich	54
Malone, K		Posse		Shepherd, S		Telemann	Carl Schuricht – 'The Complete Decca Recordings'	95
The Last Memory	44	Variations on 'The Carnival of Venice'	Ⓢ 65	Blur	44	Concertos: TWV43:G5 – Adagio; TWV44 – 32; 43; TWV53 – d1; F1; h1; TWV54 – D2; D3	Evgeny Svetlanov – 'Anthology of Russian Symphonic Music'	94
Massenet		Prokofiev		Shostakovich		Reformations-Oratorium, 'Holder Friede, heil'ger Glaube'	Terry Wey – 'Pace e guerra'	89
La Vierge – Le dernier sommeil de la Vierge: Extase de la Vierge	90	Symphony No 1, 'Classical'	37	Symphony No 8	39	Tippett		
Mathias		Q		Smirnitkaya		King Priam – Prelude, Recitative and Aria		
Divertimento	55	Quinta		Erste Liebe, Op 14	45	Toch		
Matthews, D		Themistocles is Captured	44	Socalled		Burlesken, Op 31		
Adonis, Op 105	51	R		Meanwhile...	Ⓢ 54	Capriccetti, Op 36		
An Album Leaf for Sally	60	Rachmaninov		Stanford				
Aria, Op 41	51	Piano Sonata No 1	Ⓢ 64	Benedictus and Jubilate, Op 115	76			
Birthday Piece for Richard	60	Prelude, Op 3 No 2	63	Eternal Father, Op 135 No 2	76			
Fantasia on Paganini's Second Violin Concerto, Op 147 No 1	60			Fantasia and Toccata, Op 57	76			

Jon Snow

The journalist and presenter of Channel 4 News since 1989 reveals how his love of music was instilled in him from early childhood

My mother, a pianist, was at the Royal College of Music and so there was a lot of music in the house. My father liked Beethoven and she hated Beethoven – so there was a lot of tussle about that! (She loved Brahms, by the way.) It was singing away with her at the piano that alerted them that I might have reasonable pitch and a good voice. As a result, they put me in for the trials at Winchester Cathedral and at the age of seven-and-a-half I got in. And so unfolded the most extraordinary experience.

I should have pursued a musical career but I wasn't actually musical *enough*. I could sing, and I could sing well. I had good tone, but the real problem was that I couldn't master an instrument and never got past Grade 3 on the piano and Grade 4 on the violin. And it was quite clear that I wasn't cut out for it. In many ways, it's gone to waste, except for my own enjoyment.

Our organist at Winchester was Alwyn Surplice – aptly named! – and he was a caring and decent man; he taught me a lot about music and a lot about singing. You'd have an hour-and-a-half of choral practice in the morning and then you'd sing Evensong in the evening – and that was on a weekday. Then at weekends you'd have three big choral services – Communion, Matins and Evensong – so if you didn't like what we were doing you'd be very unhappy, but I did. I felt I became part of the fabric of this medieval building. I'm lucky enough to have known when I was there that it was very, very special.

I have music on all the time, but I can't say I sit in a chair and listen to it. But it is very important to me all the same. I download music that catches my ear, but I'm not an assiduous collector of music. Even in the job I do, music is an incredibly useful concomitant. There are of course occasions when you actually need music to illustrate things and I know a lot of music that I can use. But it also provides a narrative – a narrative of the country you live in, a narrative of the Europe we live in. If you go to Vienna or Berlin, these are places where you want to try and locate the music.

There's that extraordinary thing that in moments of relative despair you will find people playing music – in Syria, in Iraq, in all sorts of places. I've come across the Syrian National Orchestra, 12 of whose members are here, and you suddenly see that for them that is a way of sustaining their 'Syrian-ness'.

I think this is the golden age for journalism. First of all, it's sorted the wheat from the chaff. The people who sat around at the back of the office and pumped out the occasional



THE RECORD I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT

Vivaldi Recomposed by Max Richter **Daniel Hope;** Berlin Konzerthaus CO / André de Ridder DG (2/13)
Purists may resist, but I must say I think it's a masterpiece. I try to be adventurous and it's given me a lot of pleasure this year.

obituary have fallen by the wayside. But if you're up for it, in what used to be the conventional media, you've a fantastic future. Look at what we do: we put out a programme every night, one hour long which about a million people watch. And you'd think that was it. But in this last 18 months, we've been posting elements of the programme in a format for mobile phones, with captions, and last year there were two billion views. That's quite something – more than any British broadcaster! And that's from a 100-strong outfit which has 15 people working online. That's got tremendous potential and I genuinely believe that quality will prevail.

I went to only my second opera the other day. (As a schoolboy, we were so steeped in choral music that we looked down on opera and I was never exposed to it.) I was on an Italian government trip to Venice for a seminar and they'd laid on Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. I worried about it because it took me up to such a pitch that not only did I cry at one point but I was completely exhilarated. Wagner clearly has the capacity to enable you to lose your sense of anything, except your emotions – and then to unleash them. (I worried a bit about what Hitler had got out of it – and I'm still worrying about what Hitler got out of it!) **G**

A non-profit, democratic cooperative, putting music and musicians first.

Classical. Jazz.

ODRADEK

A label by artists, for artists.



www.odradek-records.com

**ANONY
MUZE
.COM**



Artists are selected through our democratic,
blind judging platform **ANONYMUZE.COM**
Apply here: bit.ly/odradek

Marketed and distributed in the UK and Ireland
by Proper Music Distribution



Photo: Southbank Sinfonia

Playing on our strengths to deliver first-class performance.

Comprehensive private banking solutions; solid range of investment and advisory services; delivered one relationship at a time.

EFG International's global private banking network operates in around 40 locations worldwide, including Zurich, Geneva, Lugano, London, Madrid, Milan, Monaco, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Singapore, Miami, Bogotá and Montevideo. In the United Kingdom, EFG Private Bank Limited's principal place of business and registered office is located at Leconfield House, Curzon Street, London W1J 5JB, T + 44 20 7491 9111. EFG Private Bank Limited is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. EFG Private Bank Limited is a member of the London Stock Exchange. Registered in England and Wales as no. 2321802. EFG Private Bank Ltd is a subsidiary of EFG International.

www.efginternational.com

EFG